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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE INTENDANCIES OF GUYENNE AND LANGUEDOC
IN THE ERA OF COLBERT

by



Robert Walter Poetschke

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Intendancies of Guyenne and Languedoc in the Era of Colbert", submitted by Robert Walter Poetschke in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this thesis is to describe the activities of the intendants in Guyenne and Languedoc to determine as precisely as possible the scope of their authority and individual initiative. Another important goal is to understand better the nature of the relationships between the central government and the intendants in the two provinces.

Louis XIV and Colbert employed the intendants to great advantage throughout the kingdom as a means of keeping abreast of provincial affairs, obtaining recommendations from knowledgeable, disinterested and honest officials and, most important, extending royal authority into regions as yet untouched by the power-hungry central government. It is clear that Claude Pellot, Claude Bezons and Daguesseau performed all of these functions to the great satisfaction of the king and Colbert because all three enjoyed long terms of office.

The relationship between the central government and the intendants was equally beneficial to both. The intendants could not function without royal support, local opposition to their encroachment into provincial af-

fairs being fierce, nor could Louis XIV have established his "absolute monarchy" without the intendants' unflagging dedication to his cause.

In the field of finance, the intendants obtained funds for him, corrected some of the worst abuses in the system, and reported constantly concerning local conditions. The judicial system received close scrutiny, particularly where litigation concerning financial matters was involved. Municipal affairs and public works were treated by the intendants with considerable success: not only did the realm acquire valuable new canals, but many communities also were relieved of the burden of debts which had crippled their development for decades.

Each time an intendant became involved in some new project, the effective power of the king was extended into a new sphere of endeavour. The intendants were so closely scrutinized by Colbert and the king that they were unable to establish powers independent of the central government, although they were permitted to exercise a measure of independent initiative after years of faithful service. There was never any question among the intendants about certain limitations on their activities; if Colbert and the king did not approve of a measure proposed by an intendant, that measure went untried. Other limitations were not so clearly defined. The lack of precise limits to their authority was the key to the intendants' successes in expanding effective royal authority throughout the realm.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

1. France	257
2. Guyenne and Languedoc (detail)	258

PREFACE

This thesis grew out of a desire to investigate further the much-discussed consolidation of royal authority in seventeenth century France with particular reference to Languedoc and Gueyenne. Even a preliminary survey of the literature revealed that despite growing interest in the operations of Louis XIV's government, the efforts of royal officials in the provinces during the critical era of Colbert have received very little attention. Obviously policies of national consolidation enunciated in the royal councils were only effective if successfully implemented in the provinces. Hence, the primary concerns of this study developed around two questions. What sorts of things did the king and Colbert wish the intendants to undertake? What measures of success did the intendants achieve in trying to fulfill those wishes?

No single work could attempt this study for the whole of France. Hence, it was necessary either to sample the whole country at random or to delineate one region for intensive investigation. Because of the wide regional disparities in customs, laws, and vested interests

in the seventeenth century, the latter approach was adopted. The Southwest, roughly the area from the Biscay coast to the Rhône Valley to the south and south west of the Massif Central offered a roughly cohesive geographical unit in which laws, economic patterns and political practises derived from a shared tradition.

A study such as this carries with it limitations which are very severe to one who prefers to generalize. The work considers the activities of three intendants and their relations with the central government, particularly with Colbert; the powers and duties of the intendants will not be delineated definitively at the end of the thesis, but they will be as clear as the sources available to the author will permit. One encounters several problems in attempting an analysis of the intendants, not the least of which is the lack of secondary works of any real value. Of the works relevant to the intendency in France, only one considers exclusively the intendants, that by Godard.¹

For the purposes of this thesis, two major sources have been employed: the first is the Clément collection of documents² and the other is the Depping series.³ Other

¹Charles Godard, Les pouvoirs des intendants sous Louis XIV, particulièrement dans les pays d'élections. Paris: Larose & Forcel, 1901.

²Pierre Clément, Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert. 7 vols. in 10. Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1861-73. (Hereafter cited Clément)

³G.B. Depping, Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV. 4 vols. in 6. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1850-55. (Hereafter cited Depping)

documentary sources remain in manuscript and are available only in France. Fortunately, the study of the intendant Claude Pellot was facilitated by O'Reilly's study,¹ which is essentially a collection of documents pertinent to Pellot's career to which the author has added comments and developed some sketchy narrative. O'Reilly's book is organized in a haphazard fashion and is based largely on the printed sources cited above. The major value of the work is that O'Reilly spent considerable time in the archives of Bayonne, thereby shedding further light on aspects of Pellot's career which involved that city.

No secondary works concerning the careers of Henri Daguesseau and Claude Bezons were available in North America. There are some works in which the intendants are mentioned briefly, such as that by Cosnac,² but these are of little real value.

The documentary sources employed in this thesis presented a problem by the nature of their scope. Depping uses four volumes (in six) to present documents relating to the entire period of Louis' personal reign; Clément is more restrained, but still he attempts to present the period 1654-1683 in eight volumes (in 11). Since space was limited, they were able to present only a sample of

¹E. O'Reilly, Mémoires de Claude Pellot. 2 vols. Paris: H. Champion, 1881. (Hereafter cited O'Reilly)

²Daniel de Cosnac, Mémoires de Daniel de Cosnac. 2 vols. Paris: Jules Renouard, 1852.

the material available in the archives. This selectivity precluded any sequence of documents relating to any one intendant; therefore, one is constantly faced with documents illustrating the beginning or the end of an issue, but rarely both. There are three major exceptions to this pattern in the documents. In considering Pellot, Depping included seventy or eighty pages on the Audijos revolt; on Bezons, he included three hundred pages on the Estates, much of which had nothing to do with the intendant, but some of which is valuable; and for both Daguesseau and Bezons there is an extensive collection of documents in Clément concerning the canal du Languedoc and related developments. One other limitation of these collections is that they do not include entries exclusively concerning the intendants: both include general correspondence dealing with administration.

Another problem one encounters is the local differences in custom and tradition. These differences make it impossible to ascertain the specific functions of many local officials, whether the intendant was encroaching on legitimate rights, or whether the rights had only been usurped by the officials because no one, including the king, knew precisely what their offices entailed. If the king and his lawyers could not sort out the muddle of provincial authorities, the modern student cannot hope for precision. Each reference work consulted has a different entry for prévôt, intendant, trésorier, etc. Therefore,

this thesis does not attempt to sort out the morass of legal detail, but works around the most commonly accepted explanations of offices. This is true also of the treatment of the sovereign courts and other such institutions mentioned in the thesis. Their functions were obscured in decades of usurpation of royal authority; one thing can be said with certainty about the powers of these bodies: they were never as extensive as their members wished, and they were always more extensive than Colbert and the king wished.

Geography has also presented a few problems. Since the généralité was an administrative unit which did not necessarily correspond to the provincial boundaries, one is often confused about the intendants' jurisdictional authority. For example, Rouergue was in the généralité of Montauban, in the province of Guyenne, and under the partial jurisdiction of the Estates of Languedoc. Often this created problems for the intendant when he attempted to enforce his authority in the area because the inhabitants would try to prove that the Estates of Languedoc or the parlement of Toulouse was the authority to which they were legally entitled to appeal. Usually these were attempts to avoid the heavy taxation imposed in the pays d'élection, of which Guyenne was one, but not in the pays d'états, of which Languedoc was one. Guyenne was divided into two généralités, Bordeaux and Montauban, which divided the province into two nearly equal halves, the divi-

ding line running north-south. Languedoc was also composed of two généralités, Montpellier and Toulouse, but the division is insignificant because only one intendant served in Languedoc at any given time.

Despite these problems, examination of the documents extant allows some estimate of the activities undertaken by intendants in South West France as agents of the king's administration. Doubtless local quarrels and competition for authority absorbed much of their time. But the intendants' vast correspondence with the central government offers some guide to the activities in which the king and his ministers were most interested and offers, also, some outline of the extent of the authority which the royal government allowed its administrative officers.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE	ii
INTRODUCTION	1

SECTION I. GUYENNE DURING THE INTENDANCY OF PELLOT

Chapter

I. PELLOT AND FINANCE	11
The Audijos Revolt	27
Pellot, Bayonne and the Audijos Revolt	54
II. COMMERCE AND JUSTICE	73
Commerce	73
Justice	96
III. MINOR ACTIVITIES OF THE INTENDANT . . .	107
Public Works	107
Municipal Affairs	116
Marine Affairs	121
Religion	130

SECTION II. LANGUEDOC DURING THE INTENDANCIES OF BEZONS AND DAGUESSEAU

IV. BEZONS AND THE PROVINCIAL ESTATES . . .	135
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Chapter

V. BEZONS AND OTHER PROVINCIAL MATTERS . . .	169
Finance	169
Public Works	174
Commerce	184
Municipal Affairs	188
Justice	198
VI. DAGUESSEAU AND THE ESTATES, FINANCE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY	204
The Estates	205
Finance	207
Commerce and Industry	216
VII. DAGUESSEAU AND OTHER PROVINCIAL MATTERS . .	229
Public Works	229
Municipal Affairs	231
Justice	235
Religious Affairs	241
CONCLUSION	247
BIBLIOGRAPHY	259

INTRODUCTION

Three intendants dominated royal administration in the south west of France in the era of Colbert (1661-1683)--Claude Pellot, Claude de Bezons, and Henri Daguesseau. This thesis attempts an analysis of their powers, their duties and their relationships with the central government to the extent permitted by the sources available.

Some questions are unanswerable. For instance, it is often quite impossible to determine from the sources whether policies being carried out by the intendants were the results of their individual initiative and authority or of instructions sent by Colbert for which the documentary records are lost. However, the number of occasions on which the intendants were forced to await orders from the contrôleur général (Colbert) suggests that they made few decisions on their own; therefore, there are grounds to assume that most policies, whatever their origin, had to be cleared with Colbert before being implemented. In any case the vague nature of the role of the intendants made easier the expansion of their powers. Had the intendants been given specific powers, the organized groups in the généralités (intendancies) could have objected every time those limits were exceeded, thereby preventing

the expansion of the intendants' role and defeating the objective of greater central authority so dear to Colbert and the king. An examination of the varied activities of the three intendants who form the subject of this study suggests that they operated with only general goals--centralization and expansion of royal authority and that their powers and responsibilities changed considerably with changing circumstances.

In all matters, great or small, Colbert was obliged to consult the king. The king wished to restrict local liberties because he feared the divisive effects of organized pressure groups, religious associations and communities trying to protect old privileges. This concern permeates the crown's quarrels with sovereign courts such as the parlement of Bordeaux and the cour des aides of Montauban, with local assemblies such as the Estates of Languedoc, and with chartered towns such as Bayonne; and it explains in part the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, although bigotry cannot be ruled out as another important factor in the last decision. To control the courts and Estates, Louis XIV first needed to learn the extent of their legal powers and of their assumed powers and then to discover methods which could be employed to reduce their authority. None of the officers in the provinces could be trusted with such a charge except the intendants since all other important offices were venal (that is, purchased from the king and held for

life)¹, and the people who held them represented vested interests to which change was anathema. These people feared that changes would jeopardize their positions in the administration and, hence, their sources of income. By contrast, the intendant was totally dependent upon the good will of the king and Colbert; if he failed to retain their support, he lost his position, which was remunerative and was the key to higher and more prestigious levels of administration. As a result, the intendants performed their tasks with zeal and diligence.

Although a precise delineation of the intendants' powers was never enunciated, Colbert did draw up some rather specific guidelines for the intendants.² Among their first duties was the preparation of maps designating the lands owned by the Church and by important nobles and delineating the jurisdiction of the various courts in the provinces--parlements, seneschals' courts, royal justices and présidiaux. Other maps were to outline the boundaries of the généralités, élections and areas subject to the salt tax.

Investigating the First and Second Estates, the intendants were to determine the exact wealth of each bishopric, of all the religious houses, and the jurisdic-

¹See R. Mousnier, La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII. Rouen: Maugard, 1948.

²Instructions for the maîtres des requêtes, commissaires sent into the provinces, September, 1663. Clément IV, 27-43.

tion of each over the people in the area. The number of wealthy and influential and noble families, their connections and their influence were to be examined and reported. Furthermore, they were to evaluate the honesty, efficiency, family background, and general effectiveness of all governors and lieutenants généraux; since the governors were created primarily to protect the people from undue impositions, stated Colbert,¹ the intendants had to examine the actions of the previous governors to determine what measures were necessary if justice were to prevail.

In matters of justice, the intendants were to investigate the membership of the sovereign courts (parlements and cours des aides) to establish their general honesty, influence and loyalty. One of the more specific requests was that the intendants discover the behavior of each court officer during the minority of the king. If some officers had demonstrated a lack of loyalty during the Fronde and were now apparently loyal, could the king be certain of their loyalty if a new crisis developed? The non-sovereign courts received as much attention as did the sovereign ones.² Colbert ordered the intendants to

¹Instruction for the maîtres des requêtes, commissaires sent into the provinces, September, 1663. Clément, IV, 30.

²Sovereign courts were those from whose decisions no appeal could be made except directly to the council of the king; furthermore, royal officials were denied access to the deliberations of these courts. The non-sovereign courts were much more susceptible to coercion from the king, especially since the intendants could preside at a sitting whenever they chose to do so.

investigate all seneschals and présidiaux.

The cours des aides received special attention because they judged all legal matters concerned with taxation. The intendants were to determine the loyalty and honesty of their membership, the limits of jurisdiction, and the effectiveness and celerity with which cases were resolved. In addition, a great number of faux nobles (nobles by virtue of falsified patents) had been created by the sole authority of the cours des aides. The great value of noble status, beyond its obvious prestigious attributes, was the fact that nobles were exempt from many taxes including the taille.

With regard to all taxes, Colbert ordered his intendants to determine whether they were being assessed equitably and collected honestly. No community was to be spared because of the influence of important local lords.

The verification and liquidation of municipal debts was a major consideration of most intendants during the reign of Louis XIV, and some of the most effective agents in this matter were Pellot, Bezons and Daguesseau. Provincial conditions received a great deal of attention, Colbert being interested in the sources of revenue, the kind of industry, soil conditions, and general mood, that is, whether loyal or warlike. He also wished to know whether industries had disappeared from any regions to which they could be restored and whether new industries might be established. These last interests were dictated

largely by his desire to expand the government's tax base.

One other major consideration was the field of public works. Colbert was particularly interested in means of transportation such as rivers, canals and roads. He ordered the intendants to determine the possibility of rendering various rivers navigable and of building canals. Roads, bridges and other public works which had been allowed to deteriorate were to be restored if feasible and useful.

Omitted from the general instructions was one major matter with which all intendants were confronted, the issue of religion. Although the intendants were ordered to evaluate the influence of the Catholic Church, they were given no specific instructions at this time about the treatment of the Huguenots. As a result, Pellot was relatively free to pursue a peaceful policy of converting the Huguenots; Bezons followed suit. Daguesseau, on the other hand, was a bigot who rejected few measures which he believed would be effective in destroying the heretical confession.

That the general instructions given to the intendants in 1663 remained relevant for the entire era of Colbert is indicated by the commission of Menars, appointed intendant of Orléans in 1674.¹ His commission contains almost identical instructions with the exception of drawing

¹Quoted in Charles Godard, Les pouvoirs des intendants sous Louis XIV particulièrement dans les pays d'élections de 1661 à 1715. 458-463.

up maps of the généralité; presumably the previous intendants had carried out that commission. Considering the actions of Daguesseau in Languedoc, it is reasonable to assume that his commission was similar to that of Menars and roughly paralleled the instructions to all intendants drafted in 1663.

Although the tasks of the intendants were outlined roughly, their powers and their relationships with the other officers and institutions were far from well defined. One fact which brooked no contradiction amongst the established officials was that the intendants were a threat to their existence; therefore, they resisted the increasing authority of the intendants wherever possible.

As the personal representatives of the king, however, the intendants had a very powerful ally in Colbert which rendered their tasks considerably easier than they would have been otherwise. Many of the duties of an intendant have been outlined above, but what was the essential nature of the intendancy? To this question, only one answer can be deduced: the intendancy was designed to extend the monarchy's effective control over its subjects through officers acting as the king's personal representatives and informers in the provinces. The motive for expansion of central authority was to establish such a degree of harmony and peace within the nation that the taille and other taxes could be collected with greater facility. No more altruistic goal than this need be ex-

pounded. In nearly all cases, the activities of the intendants under consideration in this thesis can be traced to efforts to increase the revenues of the king.

Pellot had to crush the revolt of Chalosse because Colbert feared for the gabelle and the taille; the debts of the communities were important because the payment of the taille was being hindered; the Estates were crushed by Bezons because the king wanted to obtain money from them without opposition; the rivers and canals built in Guyenne and Languedoc were important because increased commercial activity through development of water transport produced a greater capacity to bear the taxes imposed by the king. Even the affairs of justice in which all three intendants were involved most often were designed to relieve the financial burden of the common man so he could bear his taxes more easily.

Secondary reference works concerning the subject of this thesis are almost non-existent. The most important work is still the excellent and scholarly work of Lavissee.¹ Although much of his detail has been refuted, the general outlines are still valid. However, Lavissee has

¹E. Lavissee, Louis XIV, Vol. VII, pts. 1 and 2 of Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la révolution, ed. by E. Lavissee (9 Vols.; Paris: Hachette, 1903-1911).

the same limitations as do Rothkrug,¹ King,² Wolf,³ and all the others who describe the augmentation of powers of the monarchy under Louis XIV: they all consider the development from the point of view of the central government rather than from the vantage point of the provincial situations.

In general, the works which attempt to describe the centralization of French bureaucracy portray the intendants as important royal agents, competent and trustworthy, whose delegated and acquired powers permitted the king to crush many local liberties. The pattern of increasing ascendancy of the intendants at the local level is generally believed to have been uniform throughout the eighteenth century to the point where they became very

¹L. Rothkrug, Opposition to Louis XIV; the political and social origins of the French Enlightenment. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965. This work considers primarily the intellectual opposition to Louis XIV and is, therefore, of little value in the present thesis.

²James E. King, Science and Rationalism in the Government of Louis XIV, 1661-1683. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949. This work analyses the attitudes of Louis and Colbert towards developing a new and coherent organizational structure of government.

³John Wolf, The Emergence of the Great Powers, 1685-1715. New York: Harper and Row, 1962, (first published in 1951). Although the main body of this work considers the post-Colbert era, Wolf does not confine himself to that period. In his other major publication, Louis XIV, New York: Norton, 1968, Wolf describes the activities of French administration from the vantage point of Versailles rather than from that of the provincial intendants; in fact, little mention is made of the role of the intendants.

important local potentates who also could resist the king.¹ The only deviation from this notion has come from Maurice Bordes² who, writing about the intendants of Louis XV, states that the powers of the intendants varied not only with their personalities but also with the kind of opposition which they encountered in the généralités. Those who were faced with Estates often had greater difficulty establishing their own local autonomy; the situation was similar in généralités inhabited by very powerful nobles, or diligent governors. Furthermore, the intendants had difficulty establishing their authority when the support of the king was denied them.

Recognizing that the intendancies varied in different regions and at different times, this thesis will outline the formative years of the intendancy in Languedoc and Guyenne, limiting itself to three intendants whose careers seem most indicative of the type of provincial agent desired by Colbert and the king.

¹See, for example, A. de Tocqueville, L'ancien régime et la Révolution. Paris: 1856, 290ff.

²Maurice Bordes, "Les intendants de Louis XV," Revue Historique, CCXXIII, 1960, 45-62.

SECTION I

GUYENNE DURING THE INTENDANCY OF PELLOT

CHAPTER I

PELLOT AND FINANCE

Claude Pellot was a member of a family of wealthy bourgeois who lived in Lyon. The family had eventually achieved the status of aldermen, thereby acquiring noble status. Pellot was the fourth generation of this family and, as a noble in a family which served the king, achieved the rank of councillor in the parlement of Normandy which he held from 1641 to 1647. Following this he became maître des requêtes de l'hôtel (1654-56); and then began his career as an intendant. He served in that capacity in Grenoble, 1656-58, in Poitiers and Limoges, 1658-62, in Poitiers, Limoges and Montauban, 1662-64 (the only time during the reign of Louis XIV when one man held three intendancies), and in Montauban and Bordeaux, 1664-69. As a reward for years of dedicated and honest service, the king appointed Pellot first president of the parlement of Normandy.¹

¹The printed sources available in North America give no indication of the earlier life of Pellot, nor do they reveal any circumstances of his family life and connections. To this statement there is one important exception: a letter from Colbert to Colbert de Terron announcing the appointment of a new intendant of Poitiers and Limoges, Claude Pellot:

"Vous scavez que M. Pellot est nostre parent et tout à nous. Ainsy, et par conséquent, vous avez toute facilité de vivre avec luy."

Colbert to Colbert de Terron, 6 October, 1658. Clé-

The sources leave no clues as to the activities of Pellot in Grenoble and Limoges, and very few about his life in Poitiers; in any case, even if there were information about this period of his life, it would not be included in this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to reveal some of the facets of the career and duties of Claude Pellot as intendant of finance, justice, and police, 1662-69. As might be expected in consequence of Colbert's interests, outlined in this chapter, financial matters formed the core of Pellot's activities. The intendant's commercial efforts were motivated by a desire to increase the capacity of his généralités to bear taxes; much of his judicial activity was devoted to easing the burden on citizens who paid the taille or the gabelle; and the contest between Pellot and Bayonne was joined because Pellot felt that the king's coffers would be filled better with a reduction of the autonomy of the city of Bayonne. Even his function of intendant of police was governed basically by the desire to ensure a peaceful, and, therefore, prosperous and tax-paying populace. Consequently, any consideration of the career of Pellot must begin with his activities in matters of finance.

Colbert expressed himself quite clearly on the role of the intendants in the financial affairs of the générali-

ment, I, 314.

All other information concerning the early life of Pellot derives from O'Reilly.

tés. In 1663, the general instruction¹ informed the intendants of the abuses which were taking place in the assessment and collection of the taille, all of which were to be observed by the intendants and then punished. The main ones were:

1. taxes levied without the permission of the king;
2. the understandings between the trésoriers de France and the élus in an élection which resulted in some areas being under-assessed and others over-assessed so that often an entire élection would be spared any but a minimal taille;
3. often the élus would conspire with the collectors of the taille so that they would claim expenses for travelling to areas which they had not visited, which apparently was costing the king large sums of money;
4. a large number of false nobles had begun to claim exemptions in the généralités; this was costing a lot of money. [These were people who had received patents of nobility by fraudulent means, including forgery, or people who were being treated as nobles through the connivance of the élus, officers of the élection, and even the cour des aides of an area.]²

The reason that so many abuses had crept into the taxation system was that the system lacked effective supervision; indeed, the system discouraged control. Every year, around July, the council sent to the trésoriers généraux de France the order to prepare the assessment of the tax. After the trésoriers had submitted to the king a general assessment for the élections in their généralité, they received the commissions which were to be sent through the intendants. These commissions which were registered and transmitted to the officers in the élections in September

¹General instructions to the intendants, 1663. Clément, IV, 27-43.

²Ibid., 37-38. This material is paraphrased from the general instructions concerning finance.

contained the sums required from each élection. At the end of October, the intendant of the généralité and the trésorier de France named by the bureau des finances travelled to each élection where they made the assessment known to the élus and divided the assessment among the parishes of the élection. The taille for any year was to be paid quarterly.

The above description applies only to the regular collection of the taille. This did not cover the exceptional cases, which apparently were far too common in 1662, of the collection of tailles due from previous years. One of Colbert's first statements concerning the payment of the restes (taille due from previous years) was that he would forget those not collected for the years prior to 1656, but all others must be paid. In order to ensure collection, Colbert allocated responsibility as follows: for the restes of 1657 and 1658, the intendants would be responsible; for those of 1659-60, the élus would be; and for 1661-62 the ordinary means would be employed.¹ Pellot had informed Colbert on 22 November, 1662, that such an allocation of responsibility in Montauban was not feasible and that a different arrangement would have to be made. Colbert replied that he was drafting an arrêt which would give effective control of the collection to Pellot.

The reallocation of powers which this arrêt pro-

¹Colbert to Pellot, 2 December, 1662. Clément, II, 236.

duced made more effective the collection of the taille and produced a phenomenon common in the seventeenth century: revolts against payment of taxes. Before discussing the actual revolts, and they were legion, a few introductory words are necessary. The distinction between intendant de justice and intendant de finance cannot be drawn successfully. As intendant de finance, Pellot was involved in some way in the collection of nearly all major forms of taxes. When people refused to pay the taxes, or when they revolted against the impositions, Pellot had to intervene to stop the revolt and to punish the offenders. Thus, as a result of his association with the taxes, Pellot was drawn into police and judicial matters. For this reason, one ought to treat the revolts of Chalosse, Bayonne, and Foix as matters of finance rather than justice.

In December, 1662,¹ Colbert acknowledged Pellot's assertion that Montauban was a very restive généralité and that revolts were far too common in the area. He instructed Pellot to prevent further revolts by establishing better order in the généralité, but was rather vague about the manner in which Pellot was to achieve this goal. One of the suggestions he did offer, however, was to supervise very closely the trésoriers de France in order to obtain assistance from them, check the abuses of their office, and to provide a good example for them to follow in the absence of

¹Colbert to Pellot, December, 1662. Clément, II, 235.

the intendant.¹ This latter idea suggests that, in some matters at least, Colbert was willing to employ the trésoriers in the role of vice-intendant or subdélégué. Provided the trésoriers would respond to the authority of the intendant, the idea could have been conducive to better order in the généralité; however, it is extremely unlikely that the trésoriers ever were favourable to the intendants, since the latter were usurping the authority of the former throughout the realm.

Colbert did make one very reasonable suggestion conducive to the peace of Montauban: Pellot should see that the généralité was not overcharged and that it could well afford the taxes. Collection of the taxes had brought about more revolts and other disturbances than it was worth. Colbert felt that there were two possible explanations for the recurring revolts. One was that the people were being taxed when they could not pay; the other was that the use of troops, usually undisciplined and unscrupulous, caused much of the trouble. He was more inclined to believe the latter argument, but he wanted to be sure.

Regardless of his opinion on the issue, Colbert was by no means hostile to the use of troops in the case of a parish recalcitrant about paying money owed to the king. He assured Pellot that he would order Saint-Luc (lieutenant général in Guyenne) to authorize the use of force by

¹Colbert to Pellot, December, 1662. Clément, II, 236.

Pellot should the latter deem it necessary. In any case, he suggested that the king would probably approve a proposal for the extension of the intendant's powers to the effect that Pellot could order the use of up to six cavaliers or fusiliers without first having to consult Saint-Luc, Colbert, or the king.¹

Pellot took to heart his instructions concerning the recovering of back tailles, and it seems once again that Colbert was willing to support the use of troops to achieve that aim. Pellot ordered inhabitants of Languedoc who were part of the généralité of Montauban to pay back taxes, and in order to collect, he sent troops to the area to be billeted by the inhabitants until payment was made. The trésoriers généraux of Toulouse objected that since these people lived in Languedoc they could not be taxed individually; Languedoc was a pays d'états which meant that the Estates were responsible for collection of the taille not some royal official, such as the intendant.² Nor could a reassessment of taxes be made in a pays d'états although apparently it could in a pays d'élection. Regardless of the validity of their arguments about the system of taxation in a pays d'états, the trésoriers généraux defeated themselves by admitting that the people who were unwilling

¹Colbert to Pellot, 3 December, 1662. Clément, II, 236.

²Presiding trésoriers généraux of the généralité of Toulouse to Colbert, 16 January, 1663. Depping, III, 16.

hosts of royal troops sent by Pellot actually lived in the généralité of Montauban. Financially, France was no longer divided according to provinces; the généralité was the jurisdictional division which the king recognized. One wonders why the taxpayers' appeal was made through the trésoriers généraux of Toulouse rather than through the cour des aides of Montauban. Pellot and the cour des aides fought almost from the beginning of his tenure as intendant, but the cour never gave up. Perhaps the people who felt they were being unjustly treated did not believe in their case enough to take it to the proper authority. They were probably trying to defend the former connection with the états of Languedoc from whom they would generally receive better treatment than from the cour des aides of Montauban. In any case, the outcome is unknown.

Colbert was worried about the effect of the disorders brought about by the troops who were employed in helping Pellot collect the back tailles.¹ He therefore agreed with the suggestion of Pellot that the soldiers receive some fixed payment from the parishes in which they were serving. This payment was to be sufficient but not exorbitant so that the communities would have no reason to complain. By paying the soldiers, the administration was providing the grounds for treating disorderly conduct of the troops in a very severe manner. Previously the troops had

¹Colbert to Pellot, 22 June, 1663. Clément, II, 6-7.

been obliged to forage, and had not been adverse to creating a great deal of havoc in the process.

In the same letter Colbert complained that he could not understand why, in such a peaceful realm as France was at that time, the inhabitants should be resisting payment so actively. He was not convinced that the troops were necessary for the collection of the taille, he stated, but if they were, they ought to be used sparingly. In a memo addressed to himself, 23 June, 1663,¹ Colbert reminded himself to speak to the king about allowing the troops to be paid by the community as he and Pellot had agreed. Even such a petty matter as this had to be supervised and decided by the king.

Apparently the king did not agree with Colbert and Pellot, for, on 25 July, 1663, Colbert wrote to Pellot that the communities were not to be forced to pay a salary to the troops sent to collect taxes from recalcitrants.² Nor was the king willing to allow the troops to live off the land. The soldiers were receiving a regular salary from the king, but Pellot and Colbert thought it was insufficient to meet their needs. The king disagreed and forbade them to permit the troops to live off the land in times when the salary payments were regular. The implication is that if the

¹Clément, VI, 207.

²Colbert to Pellot, 25 July, 1663. Depping, III, 32-3.

troops ceased to receive regular payments, they would be allowed to live off the land. Such a situation would probably arise in times of war which indicates that the troops were often foraging in the areas which they served.

The major flaw in the argument of the king, Pellot asserted, was that billeting the troops was supposed to be a method of punishment which would quickly induce payment of the taille; if, however, the troops were obliged to pay their own expenses, they would become a positive asset to the community since more money would pour into the area and enrich, usually, those from whom the troops were supposed to force payment.¹ This was the situation which prevailed in Foix in 1663, as Pellot described it. He once again suggested that he be allowed to send the troops to live in Foix at the expense of the inhabitants until the money was paid. In the margin of the document Colbert wrote "bon" but the king's decision on the subject already had been made. One is forced to guess at the outcome of this issue, but since very few documents concerning Foix during the intendancy of Pellot are available, meaning that Foix gave him little trouble, it is likely that the troops were sent either without the king's knowledge or as a result of a change of mind on his part.

Were troops really necessary to the collection of the taille? The marquis of Saint-Luc, lieutenant général

¹Pellot to Colbert, 19 December, 1663. Depping, III, 5-6.

in Guyenne,¹ stated that in Agen the people were so used to being forced by soldiers that the receveurs could not possibly collect in any other way. In Grenoble, Dalies de la Tour, receveur,² asked Colbert to prevent the first president of the parlement of Grenoble from obstructing the use of troops in the collection of the taille from those who had refused to pay. He pointed out that the troops would be no expense to the community in general since they would be billeted only with those who were reluctant to pay. The poor people, who were always among the first to pay, would not be bothered, only the rich, who were the ones refusing to do their duty. On the other hand, he stated, if sergeants and other officers were employed to extract the taxes instead of the troops, they would have to make several trips and would have to be paid out of the general funds of the area, thereby punishing not only those who had not paid, but also those who had.

A similar argument was employed by Bauyn, a Languedocien tax collector,³ who maintained that the mere threat of the use of the troops was often enough to enforce collection. A small force of six or seven men also could have

¹Saint-Luc to Colbert, 15 September, 1662. Depping, III, 9.

²Dalies de la Tour to Colbert, 11 March, 1664. Ibid., 64. La Tour was a tax collector in the généralité of Grenoble.

³Bauyn to Colbert, 13 February, 1665. Ibid., 136.

the desired effect on the inhabitants of an area, even in the largest parishes; the idea of troops frightened most people. This, he said, would cost much less than sending the ordinary officials, at great expense, to an area which could be induced to pay only by troops. The sergeants and other officials were usually ignored by the gentlemen and councillors of the parlement of Toulouse, whereas the troops were not. Bauyn pointed to the province of Guyenne as the ideal example of correct use of force. Nowhere were the inhabitants of an area more submissive than those of Guyenne when they saw that the intendant was in a position to enforce collection by using the troops; nor was there a more hot-headed and recalcitrant group when they did not believe that the troops could be used. Bauyn, therefore, asserted that in collecting taxes, he was following the lead of Pellot who ordered constraints whenever he deemed it necessary.

If the constraints which Saint-Luc, la Tour, and Bauyn wished to put on other généralités were justified, how much more so does it appear that those put on the généralité of Montauban by Pellot must have been. A letter from Colbert to Sève, successor to Pellot in Montauban, indicates the difficulty which an intendant experienced attempting to collect the taille.¹ Colbert complained that the expenses which were necessary to enforce collection of

¹Colbert to Sève, 22 September, 1670. Depping, III, 196.

the taille in Montauban were four times greater than those incurred in any other généralité. He asked Sève to find means of reducing this exorbitant cost; the greater the cost to the inhabitants of collecting the taille, the more difficult it would be to collect it at all. Colbert then admitted that the fault was not Sève's; Montauban was the most difficult généralité in France, and perhaps it would not be possible to reduce the number of occasions on which troops would have to be employed.¹

Colbert himself pointed out the best way to reduce the general resistance to the taille: assess it fairly.² A much earlier command indicated his reliance upon the intendants to see that the people were treated as fairly as possible. He instructed all of the intendants to become so well informed about the financial condition of not only the parishes, but also the richest individuals in them, that the other officials involved in assessing the taille could not possibly lead the intendants astray with incorrect information.³ Since these instructions could be followed but imperfectly, the king had to endure revolts in many parts of his realm.

¹Colbert to Sève, 22 September, 1670. Depping, III, 196.

²Colbert to Marin de la Chataigneray, 25 July, 1670. Ibid.

³Circulaires de Colbert aux commissaires départis et intendants des généralités et pays d'élection, 26 August, 1663. Ibid., 33.

Colbert may have wished for a fair assessment of the taille, but he often interfered with it on behalf of a friend, or more often, someone recommended by the king. In 1664, Pellot wrote to Colbert that the request of Castelmore (brother of the musketeer d'Artagnan) to have some of his lands ennobled, thereby relieving them of the burden of the taille, was exceedingly unwelcome, especially at a time when the intendants had received orders to ensure that the taille was divided fairly to spare the people from over-taxation. Pellot suggested that if the king really wanted to reward someone or show special favour, he could do it in a grander fashion.¹

On another occasion,² Colbert informed Pellot that he had received a request from the marquis d'Antin (brother of the marquis of Montespan) that some relief from the taille be given to his lands in the élection of Astarac. In this case, Colbert recommended that Pellot comply with the request provided that the action was commensurate with the interests of the king, that is, if the inhabitants of the entire élection could afford to take up the slack without being too over-burdened by taxation. If not, then Pellot would have to deny the request or only partially exempt the lands from taxation.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 14 December, 1664. Depping, III, vii.

²Colbert to Pellot, 13 July, 1663. Clément, VII, 39-40.

Pellot had to cope with three minor revolts during his intendency in Montauban, all of them in the area of Foix. The first has been as well described as the documents have permitted.¹ At roughly the same time (November 1663) Pellot experienced difficulty collecting the taille in Massat, a town in Conserans which was a small territory inside Foix. There the inhabitants had revolted against the taille, which they apparently had done previously as well.² At the time that Pellot was writing his report of the incident to Colbert, the town already had resumed normal behavior. However, Pellot had no intention of allowing Massat to go unpunished. He informed Colbert that the troops were being sent to the area both to collect the taille and to serve as punishment for the revolt. In this case, Pellot appears to have had the powers to order troop movement without prior consultation with Colbert; yet, in a similar case in the same month he needed permission to send the troops to Foix to live off the land. Presumably, the troops being sent to Conserans were expected to live on the salary which they normally received.

Whether the troops were officially supposed to live on their salary or off the land, the inhabitants of Massat and its environs did not comprehend the distinction. And

¹See p. 20.

²Pellot to Colbert, 13 November, 1663. Depping, III, 5.

they were probably correct in making no distinction. Once the troops arrived, life would be a special brand of hell until the taille was paid and the troops recalled. Knowing this, the people of Massat fled to the hills and Pellot had to report¹ that when the troops arrived, nearly all of the citizens had deserted the area. Indicative of the justice of Seventeenth Century France, Pellot captured the few citizens who had remained in their homes, considering all inhabitants equally guilty of conspiring to revolt, and sent them all to the galleys. He added, of course, that the troops would remain in the area until the taille had been paid.

Only once more do the documents give one any idea of the financial conditions of Foix. On 8 February, 1667, Pellot reported to Colbert² the existence of a league of faux nobles in Foix. This group of men had mistreated the soldiers who had been sent to the city to collect the taxes assessed against them, apparently with the aid of the leading citizens and the consuls of the city of Foix. Pellot stated that most of the money already had been collected so that there would be no immediate problem, but he warned Colbert that a permanent garrison should be established in the château de Foix in order to keep the whole territory of Foix subject to royal authority and to avoid further eva-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 19 December, 1663. Depping, III, 6.

²Pellot to Colbert, 8 February, 1667. Ibid., 123.

sion of taxes.

The Audijos Revolt

The major preoccupation of Pellot during the years 1664-66 was the revolt of Chalosse, led by Bernard Audijos, a gentilhomme and former army officer, against the institution of the gabelle.¹ In 1664 Colbert decided that the revenues from the gabelle had to be increased; therefore, those areas, such as Chalosse, which had enjoyed exemptions from it would henceforth be treated as any other area which had not been specifically granted special privileges. The institution of the apparatus for the ferme de la gabelle, called the bureaux de convoi, in Hagetmau was the immediate cause of the revolt.

In May, 1664, a mob forced the guards and officials of the convoi to leave Hagetmau, a small community near the border of Béarn. Many government officials were killed or wounded in the fray. Pellot informed Colbert that similar revolts had taken place in Hagetmau in the past for the same reasons, and they had been forgiven largely out of deference to Gramont, viceroy of Béarn and Navarre and governor of Bayonne.² Instead of rendering the inhabitants

¹The gabelle was a form of taxation developed to enrich royal coffers by forcing the inhabitants of an area to buy all of their salt from royal bureaux de convoi. Of course, the salt was generally priced approximately five times (or more) above the cost to inhabitants of gabelle-free areas.

²Pellot to Colbert, 26 May, 1664. Depping, III, 68.

more servile and peaceful, the pardons served only to make them bolder. In spite of their promise to accept the gabelle, the citizens of Hagetmau once again had revolted. Pellot recommended strong measures, beginning with the importation of troops. He received permission to send the troops,¹ which he sent, and informed Colbert that he intended to travel to Hagetmau in order to ensure that the inhabitants of that village were treated harshly.

One of the most eloquent defenders of the status quo in Bayonne and Chalosse was Borda, a councillor in the parlement of Bordeaux, who wrote to Cheverry, an influential nobleman of Guyenne, on 24 June, 1664, describing the detrimental effect which the installation of the gabelle would have on the commerce of the region.² He stated that the commerce of the area was dependent upon the transportation of salt from Bayonne to Dax where the inhabitants of the city and surrounding areas purchased their salt. The money which the Bayonnais received for their salt was then spent on goods produced in Chalosse, thereby keeping the money in the area and still allowing a flourishing trade. If the gabelle were set up in Dax, Saint-Sever or Bayonne, the whole commerce of the area would collapse. If that occurred, then the citizens of Chalosse would be unable to

¹Pellot to Colbert, 25 July, 1664. Depping, III, 69.

²Borda to Cheverry, 24 June, 1664. Ibid., 141-43.

pay the taille. Another argument which Borda advanced was that the revenue from the bureaux already established at Hagetmau and Mont-de-Marsan did not even exceed the cost of their establishment. Furthermore, the bureau at Hagetmau had set off the revolt.

A year later, Borda wrote directly to Colbert complaining about the inevitable collapse of the commerce of Dax should the gabelle be instituted.¹ He repeated his previous arguments and then added this: the city of Dax paid an annual taille of 50,000 to 60,000 écus (roughly 150,000-180,000 livres). Since the gabelle would wipe out the commerce of the area, the city would not be able to pay this taille; yet, the gabelle would produce, at most, 30,000 livres of revenue. Therefore, the king would be reducing his own revenue by instituting the salt tax. All these arguments notwithstanding, Colbert insisted on setting up a bureau de convoi at Dax.

Having arrived in Hagetmau, Pellot reported that the mob remained violent and continued to murder anyone suspected of loyalty to the government.² Even at this early date, Pellot was aware of the fact that Hagetmau was not the only area involved in the strife, nor was the lowest class the sole participant in the fight against the gabelle. Pellot's men captured a few of the rebels who were executed

¹Borda to Colbert, 15 August, 1665. Depping, III, 147-51.

²Pellot to Colbert, 6 August, 1664. Ibid., 95.

summarily. Those who were proven guilty in absentia were executed in effigy, a pattern which became familiar during the years 1664 to 1666. The intendant was fighting a losing battle; he could not obtain enough soldiers to track down and exterminate the rebels. Even when the troops managed to trap some of the rebels, it often transpired that the rebels were permitted to escape because the troops were either sympathetic to the rebels' cause or they had an agreement to the effect that if the troops did not hinder the rebels, the rebels would not ambush the troops. An example of this type of action is the case of la Baume, captain of a regiment of dragoons. In July, 1665, he and his men had trapped Audijos and some of his band in a house. Rather than attack, la Baume held his men back, thereby permitting Audijos to escape during the night. Pellot suspected la Baume of collusion, but could not prove the charge.¹ The testimony of several Bayonnais rebels later substantiated Pellot's claims.² Since he did not have the requisite forces, Pellot was depending on the harshness of his justice to render the country peaceful; in this policy he was deceived.

The chief obstacle to peace was a rebel named Audijos who had led the Hagetmau uprising and had continued to attack and kill anyone who could be labelled a gabelleur

¹Pellot to Colbert, 12 July, 1665. Depping, III, 94.

²Pellot to Colbert, 23 December, 1665. Ibid., 117.

(a term most people in Guyenne used as a synonym for vol-
eur). He was so well supported by the people, and not merely the poor ones, that the priest of Costure felt obliged to publish an ordinance forbidding his parishioners to give succor to the rebels, particularly Audijos. The only effect this order had was to provoke Audijos to assassinate the priest, which he did in October.

Gascony, in which Chalosse is included, was a natural area for Audijos to carry out his guerilla warfare. Rocky, rugged, tree-covered country screened the rebels from detection and presented an almost insurmountable obstacle to the royal troops, especially since most of them were mounted on horses which could not negotiate the rugged terrain. Since the woods were such a hazard for the government troops and convoys, Colbert agreed to permit Pellot to cut them down in the Chalosse territory.¹ This action would at least prevent ambush on the main roads, but it seems a poor way to defeat a rebellion.

The revolt continued to spread throughout Guyenne, mainly into Bayonne, Agen, Saint-Sever, Dax and Bordeaux. Bordeaux' participation in the revolt was subtle enough to avoid any direct confrontation with the troops of the king and to avoid the imposition of punishment for its participation. The best example of the Bordelais struggle against the gabelle is the resistance offered to the construction

¹Colbert to Pellot, 6 July, 1665. Depping, III, 93.

of the Château-Trompette.¹ The Bordelais feared that the king was rebuilding this structure solely to establish a power centre from which he could impose the gabelle; as a result, the Bordelais declared open season on anyone participating in the construction of the château. Several men were murdered solely because they were working on that structure and others because they were supplying building materials for it.

For two years, the letters of Pellot were filled with optimistic reports of the impending capture of Audijos. Each time, Audijos and his men were warned by sympathizers, were hidden, or were aided militarily. Pellot and his men caught some of the rebels and usually dealt with them in a manner designed to discourage further resistance, but Pellot could not prevent Audijos from roaming at will. Rewards were offered for his capture; captured rebels were interrogated for information which could lead to Audijos; still the rebel leader went free.

One of the major factors in the ability of Audijos to escape capture was the proximity of Béarn. His pattern of attack was to rest in Béarn and develop a plan, send word to several of his men to recruit rebels, cross over into Gascony, murder and pillage anyone suspected of sympathizing with the gabelleurs, disperse his men, and then escape back into Béarn. This infuriated Pellot because

¹See p. 109.

Poyanne, governor of Dax, Béarn and lower Navarre, was not attempting to capture the rebel chief. In addition, nearly all the inhabitants of Béarn favoured the revolt and did all they could to help Audijos. Pellot could not enter Béarn without first procuring a special permit from the parlement of Pau. Having obtained the permit, he would enter Béarn only to find that Audijos had been warned and had escaped into Spain or some other area. Without co-operation from both the citizens of Béarn and Poyanne, Pellot was powerless to end the revolt.

One need not seek far to understand Béarn's participation in the revolt. In 1663 Colbert had decided to impose the gabelle in the south of France, including Béarn which had long enjoyed very special privileges in that respect. The salt deposit in Béarn, at Salies, was a good source of revenue to the area; according to many, it was the major source of commerce for Béarn, Bayonne and Charlosse. Béarn had been granted the right to trade its salt in the areas immediately to the north without taxation of any kind. Colbert felt that if the gabelle were imposed in the area, he would be tapping new and rich resources for the king's treasury.

Accordingly, he published an edict which attached to the royal domain the fontaine de Salies (the Béarnais salt source). On 31 March, 1664,¹ Pellot wrote to Colbert

¹Pellot to Colbert, 31 March, 1664. Depping, I, 608-9.

that the Estates of Béarn had sent a deputy to him to object to the forthcoming annexation of the fontaine de Salies. Colbert had given Pellot an arrêt which charged him to effect the annexation, but the intendant had decided that it would be best to look into the claims of the Estates of Béarn that they held title to the rights of the fontaine. However, the Estates would not show Pellot any documentation because another of their special privileges granted them the right to respect only the direct authority of the king.¹ Pellot advised that the titles of the Estates be examined before the annexation was effected. If the king encroached on rights given in good faith, then no one would trust the king or any of his officials which would produce even greater disturbances in the kingdom. If he summarily annexed the fontaine, and the rights claimed by the Estates were subsequently proven valid, the king would be guilty of encroaching upon the guaranteed rights of his subjects; if the rights were proven invalid, the king would still have demonstrated a disregard of the just processes of his own law by not waiting. The best policy, Pellot stated, was to wait until the situation was defined clearly. Such was Pellot's position in March, 1664.

It is easy to believe that Pellot often had cause to regret his stand regarding the fontaine. Colbert had accepted Pellot's advice and postponed the gabelle in

¹Depping, I, 608.

Béarn. However, Colbert was unwilling to postpone the tax where no special privileges had ever been granted but where, for one reason or another, the gabelle had never been imposed. Such an area was Chalosse. Therefore, Pellot was ordered to institute that tax in Chalosse, which produced revolt. As early as December, 1664, Pellot had swung to the opinion of the king and Colbert that the fontaine de Salies ought to be annexed and the gabelle imposed there first. Without such a step, it would be impossible to effect the gabelle in any other area because salt could, and would, be smuggled from Béarn, thereby depriving the convoy of revenue. Pellot offered three suggestions:¹ the king should annex the fontaine, destroy it, or put a ring of troops around Béarn in order to prevent salt smuggling into Bayonne and Chalosse. After a short time, all of these areas would be forced to buy salt on the king's terms.

Pellot now agreed with Colbert and the king about annexing the fontaine, but the latter had reversed their stand. They were not willing to risk a total rebellion in Gascony and possible interference from Spain. The Audijos revolt had alerted them to just such a possibility. However, they held to the idea of establishing the gabelle in Dax, Mont-de-Marsan and the rest of Chalosse. Pellot was unable to understand the new position; nearly all of his letters reflect his rage and confusion. He constantly

¹Pellot to Colbert, 7 February, 1665 and 7 April, 1665. Depping, III, 82-3.

described the difficulty of imposing the gabelle in Chalosse without first imposing it in Béarn, and invariably closed his letter with the suggestion that the fontaine de Salies be annexed or, at least, that the salt supply from it to Bayonne and Chalosse be halted.

An interesting and important factor in the role Pellot played in the revolt is that he was not allowed to act without permission from Colbert. If he wanted to enter Béarn, he had to ask Colbert; if he wanted to send the troops to Hagetmau, he had to ask Colbert; he was constantly awaiting orders. Only in meting out justice to the rebels does he appear not to have required specific orders. In this area, Pellot did what he deemed necessary. In the initial stages of the revolt, he executed everyone of lesser rank whose guilt could be proven; in the later stages, he was more inclined to be lenient. Those of high rank, or protected by someone of high rank (as, for example, Gramont¹) received only criticism from Pellot. Such was seventeenth century justice.

As the revolt wore on, many towns tired of the struggle. In May, 1665, the people of Aire told Pellot that they would do anything to be rid of the troops who were billeted in their area. Pellot, of course, considered this wonderful. He informed the principal citizens that since they had engaged in open rebellion against the

¹See below, p. 40-41.

king and the gabelle, the only way they could regain favour was to permit the institution of the salt tax. The reply was that the citizens of Aire would suffer any punishment, no matter how severe, rather than allow the gabelle to be established in the area. Pellot was characteristically optimistic about the efficacy of billeting troops there:

But I believe that, when they become even more tired of punishment by the troops and otherwise, they will change their minds¹

On 20 May, Pellot reported that the parish of Aire intended to send a deputation to the king defending its right to exemption from the gabelle. Pellot asserted that no area in the realm involved in rebellion had any rights at all. In any case, he stated that he was certain that the marquis of Poyanne, governor of Saint-Sever, Dax and Béarn, had instigated the revolts and the deputation.² He advised that to accede to the demands of the deputation would be to encourage further resistance to the gabelle. This would be particularly unfortunate since Pellot believed that the rest of Chalosse was beginning to accept the inevitability of the tax. The inhabitants of Mont-de-Marsan had agreed to accept it and others seemed to be of the same mind.³

¹Pellot to Colbert, 3 May, 1665. Depping, II, 150. "Mais je crois que quand ils auront été plus fatiguez encore et chatiez par les troupes et autrement, qu'ils pourront changer de sentimens"

²Pellot to Colbert, 20 May, 1665. Ibid., III, 90.

³Pellot to Colbert, 20 May, 1665. Ibid., 91.

Not all areas of Gascony were as quiet as Mont-de-Marsan, however, and one of them was to cause Pellot a good deal of trouble in the succeeding months. This was the city of Bayonne, the largest in Southwestern France (population 18,000-20,000) with the exception of Bordeaux. Informed that several of Audijos' chief accomplices were living in Bayonne, Pellot ordered his men to arrest the rebels. Due to the sympathy of the mob with the rebels, the latter were permitted to escape and Pellot's men barely escaped with their lives.¹ Pellot received permission to send the troops to Bayonne to pacify that city. The conflict between Pellot and Bayonne is an interesting one, and, although much of it revolves around the Audijos revolt, the issue transcends the immediate question of the gabelle. It is for that reason that the conflict is not described in detail here.²

Having received orders from Colbert to establish the gabelle in Dax³ Pellot replied that since there were already several trouble spots in Gascony because of the impending gabelle, it would be wiser to force one area to accept the tax (namely Bayonne) so that the example would be set. He once more returned to the importance of capturing

¹Pellot to Colbert, 3 May, 1665. Depping, III, 84-86.

²See "Pellot, Bayonne and the Audijos Revolt" p. 54-72.

³Pellot to Colbert, 6 May, 1665. Depping, III, 86.

the fontaine de Salies especially since the people of Béarn had done nothing to merit special consideration from the king. Despite Pellot's pleas, the king and Colbert insisted on the founding of a convoi in Dax and refused to take any immediate action on the question of Bayonne and Béarn.¹ On 12 September, 1665² Pellot reported that, in spite of the reluctance of many people to be seen contributing to the gabelle, little by little Dax was submitting to the tax. On 16 September, the collection began without incident.³ However, Pellot reported that continued maintenance of the gabelle in Chalosse would require another company of foot-soldiers. Furthermore, the woods and bushes along the roads which the soldiers were obliged to travel would have to be cut in order to prevent ambushes.⁴

The country continued to become more co-operative in July, 1665. Even the citizens of Bayonne were helping capture some of the rebels; with Poyanne out of Béarn, the parlement of Pau was apparently attempting to eject Audijos from Béarn, if not to capture him. It even captured two of his accomplices.⁵ This capture caused some friction between Pellot and the parlement of Pau because, although the

¹Pellot to Colbert, 26 July, 1665. Depping, III, 95-6.

²Pellot to Colbert, 12 September, 1665. Ibid., 107.

³Pellot to Colbert, 12 September, 1665. Ibid., 111.

⁴Pellot to Colbert, 7 October, 1665. Ibid., 112.

⁵Pellot to Colbert, 3 August, 1665. Ibid., 96.

king's orders gave Pellot jurisdiction over the prosecution of all rebels, the parlement of Pau refused to allow Pellot to try the criminals which it had caught.¹

Pellot requested Colbert to order the parlement to surrender its prisoners. Colbert's reply is lost but the outcome can be pieced together. On 22 August, Pellot again wrote to Colbert stating that if the parlement of Pau punished the rebels "comme il faut," then he would consider such action to be just as effective as his own justice. In fact, Pellot was not only willing to allow the parlement of Pau to judge the men which it had refused to surrender, but he even went so far as to send three men to be tried in Pau.² It is obvious that Pellot was willing to allow the parlement to judge the men because such an action would demonstrate that it wished to dissociate itself from the revolt. This would tend to curtail the Béarnais offers of assistance to Audijos, and, as Pellot stated, the rebels would fare no better in the courts of Pau than they had in his own.

An important feature of the revolt of Chalosse is the complicity of Gramont, viceroy of Navarre and Béarn, and governor of Bayonne. Pellot accused Gramont, or rather his officers, of responsibility for the revolt:

¹Pellot to Colbert, 10 August, 1665. Depping, III, 98.

²Pellot to Colbert, 3 September, 1665. Ibid., 104.

The culprits of Chalosse are not included in the amnesty, especially the officers of Gramont; they are the authors and the main cause of all of the disorders.¹

Pellot based his accusation on the testimony of the captured rebels who were in a position to know. Whether the testimony was true cannot be determined since interrogation in the seventeenth century often produced the testimony desired by the interrogator. However, Pellot was not a particularly vindictive sort, so that, although he did not like Gramont, he would not have been likely to force a false testimony from his prisoners to spite an enemy. In general, he was interested only in efficient administration; if Gramont was guilty of thwarting that aim, then Pellot felt that Colbert should be made aware of that fact.

The complicity of Gramont manifested itself in the following way: one of Gramont's magistrates, la Burguerie, as well as his procureur d'office, his clerk, and his concierge had made public some letters from le Roux, maître d'hôtel of Gramont in which le Roux informed them on behalf of Gramont that the latter had seen the kind of justice which could be expected against the officers of the convoi, and that it was useless to expect the soldiers to be punished in court; therefore, the only method of obtaining redress for the abuses committed by the soldiers was to

¹Pellot to Colbert, 22 August, 1665. Depping, III, 100.

"Pour les coupables de Chalosse, il n'en est pas de mesme, et surtout lesdits officiers de M. le mareschal de Gramont: ils sont les auteurs et les principaux causes de tout le désordre."

expel them from Chalosse. Furthermore, the accomplices testified that they knew that Gramont and his wife would look favourably on the assassination of the officers of the convoi.

Pellot was aware that it would be a simple matter to abuse the name of the maréchal, but since Gramont had done nothing immediately to quell the revolt, his complicity seemed to be proved. The orders which Gramont finally did give to put an end to the revolt were ineffective, which Pellot attributed to Gramont's lack of control over the mob once it had been activated. As he put it,

It is easy to let the people take the bit in their teeth, but later, one cannot rein them in.¹

The sins of Gramont were, therefore, at least according to Pellot, sins of omission rather than sins of commission. (Pellot made similar claims against the gentlemen of Chalosse who were contributing to the revolt by refusing to reveal what they knew about it.) In spite of the definite complicity of some of Gramont's men, Pellot would not judge them until he received explicit orders to that effect from Colbert; he was afraid of clashing too seriously with a man of such stature as Gramont. He did say, however, that he would pretend to proceed against them in order to scare them into making a confession and perhaps giving him information

¹Pellot to Colbert, 22 August, 1665. Depping, III, 101.

" . . . il est facile de lascher la bride au peuple; mais, après, l'on ne le peut pas retenir."

about the activities of Audijos. The documents do not reveal the outcome of this issue, but one doubts that Gramont's men were ever brought to trial.

Pellot laid similar charges against the marquis of Poyanne, governor of Dax, Béarn and lower Navarre. Even without proof that Poyanne actually wanted a revolt, the intendant maintained that he had exhibited great negligence in allowing his territories to get out of hand. It was obvious from the number of obstacles which Poyanne placed in the path of the establishment of the gabelle that the governor was attempting to avoid the hatred to which support for it would have subjected him.¹ Yet Pellot held no grudges when the reason for them disappeared. In the case of Poyanne, Pellot ceased his hostile reports when Poyanne appeared to be ready to perform the tasks which his position entailed. On 9 November, 1665, Pellot informed Colbert that conditions would improve in Bayonne because Poyanne, who obviously had regained his sense of duty, would arrive there shortly.² Pellot had the mind of a good Prussian bureaucrat: he demanded only efficiency and loyalty to the crown. Personal dislikes played almost no role in his career.

Another major personage in southern France, the vicomte de Poudens, syndic de la noblesse du Béarn (that is,

¹Pellot to Colbert, 2 October, 1665. Depping, III, 111.

²Pellot to Colbert, 9 November, 1665. Ibid., 113.

the person entrusted with the protection of the rights of Béarn when the Estates were not sitting), demonstrated sentiments not strictly in accord with Pellot's on the subject of Audijos. The intendant had received proof¹ that the vicomte had had three interviews with Audijos in the recent past. This was especially reprehensible because Poudens had been given orders to capture Audijos. The significant feature of this particular letter, however, is contained in the sentence: "Therefore one can prosecute him, if His Majesty wishes". (emphasis mine)² There was little doubt of the guilt of Poudens, yet Pellot did not dare prosecute without specific orders from Colbert. Many lower class persons whose guilt was no greater, and often entirely unproven, were simply hanged or broken on the wheel. One ceases to wonder that the administration underwent such hardships attempting to establish greater central authority when its chief agents were under such restrictions to punish rebels.

Since peace was gradually returning to Gascony in July and August, 1665, Pellot hastened to assess the damage in order to determine the punishment which he would mete out to Béarn and Chalosse. The amazing fact is that no troops were necessary to enforce the payment of the fines.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 2 October, 1665. Depping, III, 113.

²Pellot to Colbert, 2 October, 1665. Ibid.
"Ainsi il y a de quoy faire son procez, si S.M. veut."

Perhaps the Béarnais were unaware that further impositions were soon to be levied. In September, 1665, Pellot assessed the parishes of Béarn 40,000 livres as damage payments to the fermier. He believed that the communities were favourably disposed to make the payments, provided, of course, that the king ratified the assessment of his intendant. To provide incentive for the king in making his decision about Pellot's assessment, the intendant pointed out that if the settlement were rejected, then the fermier would demand damages from the king himself.¹ This obviously had the desired effect, for on 24 September, 1665, Pellot acknowledged the receipt of an order from the king permitting him to demand from Béarn the fine he had imposed. In case of resistance by the Béarnais, the king included permission to use force if necessary. He even granted Pellot the right to billet troops in Béarn until the money was all paid. In October, Pellot learned that the Béarnais still refused to pay. Having sent troops on 4 October, Pellot could report on 16 October that the communities of Béarn had capitulated and soon would make their payments. By 19 October, he reported that he was withdrawing some of the troops.²

Adopting a new strategy, Pellot decided in September, 1665, that he would not seek to capture any more of

¹Pellot to Colbert, 9 September, 1665. Depping, III, 105.

²Pellot to Colbert, 19 October, 1665. Ibid., 111-12.

the rebels provided that they behaved themselves.¹ This softening of tone was not intended to include those who had actually participated in the murder of soldiers and officials of the crown, but it does reflect a feeling on the part of Pellot that the worst was over. The only person he really needed to catch was Audijos who, by this time hiding in Spain, entered France only on periodic raids.

Pellot relaxed his prosecution of the rebels, but he did not forego the gabelle, the original cause of the revolt. In September he advised Colbert that it would be possible to force the parish of Saint-Sever to accept the gabelle,² but he also recommended that the troops remain in the area for the winter. He suggested that their commander be given powers to take the troops wherever necessary to quell any revolts, subject to the commands of Saint-Luc who would make the final decision on the necessity and efficacy of the troops. Whether the troops were ever used was irrelevant to Pellot. If the populace were informed of their presence revolt would not be tempting, he reasoned.

By October, Pellot was so optimistic that he predicted that even if Audijos returned, he would be unable to cause much damage since most of his accomplices had been captured and the country seemed little disposed to revolt.³

¹Pellot to Colbert, September, 1665. Depping, III, 105.

²Pellot to Colbert, 24 September, 1665. Ibid., 110.

³Pellot to Colbert, 16 October, 1665. Ibid., 112.

A very hopeful sign was the capture of the rebel priest, Jean de Lanusse, not so much because Lanusse was terribly important to the rebel cause but rather because the citizens of the area had taken him, indicating a complete and true submission to the will of the king.¹ Pellot was so encouraged by the tranquillity of Chalosse that he had dismissed most of the troops from the area by 9 November, 1665.² He felt that peace could be maintained by such measures as the reform of the magistracy of Bayonne, the general amnesty which was being drafted, and similar policies. In addition, the arrival of Poyanne in the area would help stiffen the resolve of the administration. Pellot probably was placing most of his hopes for continued peace on the amnesty which he drew up and sent to Colbert on 20 November, 1665. In the recommendation, he exempted from the amnesty only four people involved in the revolt in Chalosse and about six in Bayonne.

Pellot was so interested in seeing the last of the revolt that he revoked the punishments of those who had been assessed fines (for resisting the fermiers) either by himself in the previous year (i.e. 1664) or by the cour des aides of Guyenne. He did this for three reasons: first, the fermiers had done nothing to help stamp out the revolt and, therefore, did not deserve any special treatment or

¹Pellot to Colbert, 16 October, 1665. Depping, III, 112.

²Pellot to Colbert, 9 November, 1665. Ibid., 113.

assistance from the king; second, he preferred to leave the country in peace, if possible; and third, since almost none of the fines assessed had yet been collected and since it appeared that they would be difficult, if not impossible, to collect in the future, he reasoned that he might as well bow out gracefully and give the impression that the amnesty on the fines was a result of the king's generosity and compassion rather than a function of his inability to collect them.¹

However, Pellot was unwilling to revoke the fines assessed by himself in 1665, by the parlement of Pau, or by the officers of Bayonne. Once again, he had several good reasons for his actions: first, much of the money already had been collected and those who still owed seemed disposed to pay if pressed; second, those to whom the damage payments were due were men who had suffered in the interests of the king and should, therefore, be aided by enforced collection of the fines; and third, the officers of Bayonne insisted that their inhabitants not be exempt from payment. This last reason shows the desire of the most important inhabitants of Bayonne to please the king by showing how little they had had to do with the revolt. Furthermore, if the citizens whom the officers of Bayonne had not been able to control were punished, they would be more hesitant to engage in future uprisings which could only impair the

¹Pellot to Colbert, 20 November, 1665. Depping, III, 115.

standing of Bayonne with the king; if the king were angered, they feared, he might deprive them of some of the city's privileges.

The above two paragraphs give one insight into the authority of the intendant of Bordeaux and Montauban, or, at least, they give one an idea of what the intendant thought were his powers. Without even consulting Colbert, Pellot revoked punishment assessed by the cour des aides of Guyenne and by himself, which indicates that he had been given, or had usurped, authority over the decisions of the cour des aides. Furthermore, it is evident that Pellot had needed no special permission to levy the fines of 1664 or else he would also have required permission to revoke them. One cannot say, however, that the intendant was empowered to levy fines in normal times without permission, because it is quite possible that he had been given a general commission to deal with the revolt in some of its aspects without reference to the higher authorities.

Pellot also gave the impression that had he so desired, he could have revoked the fines assessed by the parlement of Pau and the officers of Bayonne (which are very extensive powers) without special permission from Colbert. It must be emphasized that the intendant only believed he had such authority; whether he did, in fact, have it is doubtful in the extreme. Bayonne was under the protection of Gramont who was not very amenable to increased royal authority in the city, and such powers would certainly have

constituted increased royal authority. The parlement of Pau was, temporarily, less hostile to the intendant, but one would hardly call it subservient, as the struggle with Pellot over the trial of some of the rebels indicated.

Pellot's optimism about the end of the revolt did not prevent him from recognizing the possibility of further activities on the part of Audijos. Accordingly, he recommended that troops be made available for the areas of Chalosse, Béarn, and lower Navarre, and that Saint-Luc and Poyanne be instructed to co-operate to prevent further unrest.¹ A month later, Pellot reported that he had been approached on the subject of reaching an agreement with Audijos. The rebel was willing to give up his revolt if the king would grant him grace. Pellot stated that he had rejected the idea of a bargain. The king, he told the man, would not bargain about his grace; if Audijos wanted grace, he would have to put himself at the mercy of the king. Such a suggestion Audijos wisely declined.²

On 30 December, 1665,³ Pellot received approval of the amnesty which he had drafted for Gascony. To render it effective, he had had to send it to the parlement of Bordeaux for ratification and then publish it throughout the territory, which he wasted no time doing.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 20 November, 1665. Depping, III, 115.

²Pellot to Colbert, 23 December, 1665. Ibid., 118.

³Pellot to Colbert, 30 December, 1665. Ibid.

One assumes that the amnesty did its work because Pellot reported on 5 June, 1666 that he would cease writing about Chalosse since the area had become very peaceful. This is not to say that Audijos no longer appeared there. As Pellot stated, Audijos visited Chalosse from time to time but did not undertake any attacks on the convoi or on any government officials.¹ Obviously Audijos still had a great deal of support in Chalosse, since he could move through the area at will, but he refrained from causing any trouble. Pellot advanced two hypotheses for the new pacific attitude: first, Audijos could not stir the people of Chalosse to rebel; and second, he would not attempt to do so because he wanted the amnesty to apply to him as well. Many advances had been made to Pellot to obtain such an amnesty and Pellot was inclined to accede to that wish. He suggested that the best policy was to grant Audijos the amnesty and then give him some position in the service of the king outside the realm. This was strange punishment for a rebel who had caused much of the damage the revolts had wrought in Guyenne. Yet, Pellot's suggestion was the only reasonable course of action to follow. If Audijos was to be stopped, the only method was to offer him a life preferable to that of rebellion. Otherwise, he would continue to prey on the territory of Chalosse.

Colbert rejected the suggestion of amnesty for Audi-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 5 June, 1666. Depping, III, 120.

jos, thereby forcing Audijos to recommence his actions against the gabelleurs of Chalosse. On 2 August, 1666, two months after Pellot had stated that he would cease writing about the completely pacified area of Chalosse, he informed Colbert that Audijos and his accomplices had once more conducted raids on the royal officials of Chalosse. The parlement of Bordeaux now considered that the Audijos affair was its preserve, since the amnesty had been ratified in the parlement. This meant that the intendant was not legally entitled to participate in any of the affairs of the revolt which had occurred since the amnesty. Pellot did not contest that argument but insisted that he be given an arrêt permitting him to rejoin the battle against Audijos because du Bourg, the man whom the parlement had chosen to conduct the investigation and to capture and punish the rebels, was doing his task with the utmost sloth.¹ Pellot's next two letters also requested that he be given authority in the Audijos affair but apparently Colbert felt that he was needed elsewhere or was ineffective against the rebel.

Although he did not receive the desired arrêt, Pellot continued to involve himself in the affairs of the revolt. On 9 August, 1666,² he informed Colbert that Baillet, one of the two remaining chief lieutenants of Audijos, had been captured and that he had interviewed him. The infor-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 2 August, 1666. Depping, III, 120-21.

²Pellot to Colbert, 9 August, 1666. Ibid., 121-22.

mation he acquired gave him the names of nearly all the rebels still actively working against the king. Quick action (preferably by him) would result in the eradication of nearly all the remaining rebels, he claimed. The only important accomplice of Audijos still at large was Plantier who conducted the fund-raising campaigns in Bayonne.

Baillet also informed Pellot that Audijos no longer intended to attack the convoy but that, henceforth, his targets would be those individuals whom he believed to have informed against him. In order to retain the sympathy of the inhabitants of Chalosse, Audijos would claim that his victims were really gabelleurs and, therefore, deserved to die.

In August, Pellot ceased to have anything to do with the revolt; however, on 7 January, 1667,¹ he received word that Plantier had been killed. In addition to keeping informed on the revolt, Pellot had ordered the arrest of Laforcade, another of the rebels who had sought refuge in Montauban. The subsequent history of Audijos is extremely interesting. A letter from Colbert to Sève,² intendant of Bordeaux, dated 30 November, 1674, indicates Audijos still was enough of a problem seven years later to warrant a reward of 300 pistoles (approximately 6,000 livres).

¹Pellot to Colbert, 7 January, 1667. Depping, III, 123.

²Colbert to Sève, 30 November, 1674. Clément, II, 363-4.

Audijos was finally granted a total pardon and the command of a regiment of dragoons.¹ Rebellion had its profitable moments, even under an "absolute" monarch.

There is one further matter which needs clarification -- the gabelle and the fontaine de Salies. In 1680, Colbert drew up a mémoire for the king which was a statement of the condition of his finances.² In this brief, Colbert listed all the areas in which the gabelle was established. Guyenne and Béarn were absent from the list, indicating that Pellot's efforts were all in vain. Not only did Audijos receive a commission in the king's army, but he also helped to prevent what seemed the inevitable -- the establishment of the gabelle in Southwestern France. Since the gabelle did not exist in Guyenne and Béarn, one must infer that the king had not taken over the fontaine de Salies.

Pellot, Bayonne, and the Audijos Revolt

In France only Bayonne does not properly recognize the authority of the king's orders; everywhere else his authority is absolute. I believe that the time and opportunity have come to establish the king's authority in this city as it is elsewhere.³

This passage aptly sums up Pellot's attitude towards

¹O'Reilly, I, 478.

²Mémoire pour rendre compte au roy de l'état de ses finances. Clément, II, 121.

³Pellot to Colbert, 3 May, 1665. Depping, II, 151. "Il n'y a plus que Bayonne en France où les ordres du roy ne sont pas bien reconnus; partout son autorité est entière, et j'estime que l'occasion et le temps sont fort propres pour l'establir tout à fait dans ladite ville comme ailleurs."

Bayonne. With the compartmentalized mind of a thorough bureaucrat, Pellot found that the liberties enjoyed by the Bayonnais offended his sense of order. While the rest of the kingdom gradually fell under the relatively complete authority of the king, Bayonne resisted successfully. Thus Pellot and Bayonne in relation to the Audijos revolt must be considered in a larger context than was the case with Chalosse. Pellot was determined to crack the strength of Bayonne, but the fight had four participants: Pellot, Bayonne, Colbert (representing the king) and Gramont, the governor and protector of Bayonne.

In general, the king and Colbert were careful to treat the city of Bayonne with kid gloves, largely because of its proximity to Spain and the embarrassing consequences of a full-blown revolt in the area. In 1674, Colbert explicitly stated his feeling about the city:

. . . I see . . . how ill disposed this city is, but at present, it would be very difficult to bring it into line in case the attempt induces it to become totally disobedient. We must bide our time and disturb the situation as little as possible.¹

In 1664, the position of the king was stronger, but not so strong that he could disregard the feelings of the inhabitants of that city.

¹Colbert to Sève, 30 November, 1674. Clément, II, 363." . . . je vois . . . combien cette ville est mal disposée; mais il est bien difficile, dans le temps où nous sommes, de pouvoir la remettre dans le devoir, en cas qu'elle s'en fust écartée. Il faut seulement s'appliquer à couler le temps et, autant que possible, ne rien émouvoir."

The strongest action the king permitted in Bayonne was the attachment to his coffers of one-half of the revenues of the special customs of Bayonne. The Bayonnais agonized, but in vain. They felt that the customs had become part of the rights of the city by long exercise, but the king quite obviously disagreed.¹ In addition to depriving them of half of these revenues, the king demanded an account of the use to which the customs had been put during the preceding twenty years. Since the city council changed half of its personnel every year, the Bayonnais were doubtful that the task assigned to them would prove easy of fulfillment, but they promised to attempt it.

Eight months later, Pellot had examined the accounts of Bayonne and reached the conclusion that the Bayonnais had in no way justified their expenditures of the customs revenue.² The Bayonnais claimed that most of the money had been spent serving the king in such ways as building and maintaining the fortifications and other public buildings, which fact Pellot said could not be proven; they kept no books on the actual cost of the structures and could, therefore, claim that they had spent more than they actually had. Furthermore, Pellot reported that the city could not meet its financial obligations without the additional revenue

¹Les échevins, jurats et conseil de la ville de Bayonne à Colbert, 14 June, 1664. Depping, I, 728-9.

²Pellot to Colbert, 7 February, 1665. Ibid., III, 81-82.

from the other half of the customs, nor could it even service the large municipal debt, which suggested that the special customs had been absorbed into the city's general revenues.

Pellot did not dispute Bayonne's fiscal straits; instead, he attempted, as usual, to derive advantages for the king from the predicament of the city. Colbert had indicated a desire to establish the gabelle in areas where it had not yet made an appearance, but the resistance was enormous. Pellot felt that since the king had Bayonne at a disadvantage he would be able to obtain some concession from the city. In return for the restoration of the other half of the customs, the king might be permitted to install a convoi; in addition, the king would promise to ignore the gross mismanagement of the customs revenues which had taken place during the previous twenty years.

However, Pellot had not only to convince the Bayonnais to accept these conditions, but he had also to convince the king and Colbert to give up a guaranteed present income (the king's portion of the customs) in favour of a potential future income (the gabelle). He argued that after a short time the gabelle would more than make up for the immediate losses of revenue which the king would incur, but his words fell on deaf ears. The king insisted on setting up the bureau de convoi in Dax instead.

Pellot's attempts to subject Bayonne to greater central authority did not cease until he gave up his inten-

dancy in 1669. The Audijos revolt gave him many opportunities for promoting his schemes against the city, but the best chance occurred in 1665. Having learned that several of Audijos' main accomplices were living in Bayonne, Pellot sent two of his men to that city to arrest the rebels.¹

The mayor (premier échevin) assisted them by sending along two of his own guards. Having arrested two rebels, the men proceeded to the home of the mayor, but en route a crowd of Bayonnais assisted one rebel to escape. Realizing the danger from the mob, the captors hurried their lone prisoner to the mayor's home, where they expected protection since the mayor had a large personal guard. But their hopes were soon dashed when the mayor, refusing to have his home treated as a jail, turned them into the streets once more. The only place left was the city prison, but reaching that destination proved impossible. The mob sprang to the rescue of the remaining prisoner when the latter shouted that he was being taken away by gabelleurs. Not only did the prisoner escape, but Pellot's men only managed to survive the rage of the mob because some of the aldermen placated the crowd with a promise to remove the gabelleurs to jail. This event motivated Pellot to make the statement which heads this section of the thesis.² Pellot was enraged at this affront to the king and his officers and urged that

¹This story is paraphrased from Pellot's account, 3 May, 1665. Depping, II, 150-51.

²See p. 54.

the city be punished and that the magistracy, which obviously was unwilling or unable to contain the canaille, be reformed.

Naturally the Bayonnais presented a different version of the struggle.¹ They chose to ignore the account of the first prisoner being helped to escape. They began with Pellot's men almost reaching the city prison and then being saved by some of the aldermen from death at the hands of the mob.² Their story ignored the role of the mayor in the incident.

Pellot raged at the inability of the city to control the canaille and the city tried to placate him by offering all the assistance it could give, hoping to avoid the action they expected Pellot to demand, namely, calling in the troops to punish the lawless elements of the city. The Bayonnais claimed that the canaille was no longer out of control, but since they had to offer a large escort for the two men whom Pellot had sent there, one doubts the accuracy of their contention. It is also obvious that the aldermen were less eager to help Pellot's men capture whatever sympathizers of the revolt there were in Bayonne than

¹All of the information in this section which illustrates the arguments of the Bayonnais is taken from O'Reilly, I, 497-520; he was able to consult the archives of Bayonne and quotes them at great length on these pages.

²Report of the town council of Bayonne, 23 April, 1665. O'Reilly, I, 498.

they were to rid the city of Pellot's representatives.¹ A letter from Pellot to the city council of Bayonne really frightened the Bayonnais because Pellot informed them that he was sending a report of the incident to the king.² They feared that their version of the story would not be heard unless they made a complete report on the issue immediately. In addition, they wrote to Gramont and Cheverry asking them to speak on behalf of Bayonne.

On 3 May, 1665,³ Pellot recommended that the troops be sent to Bayonne both to punish the city and to prevent further disturbances of a similar nature. A week later, he reported that he had received a delegation from Bayonne which agreed that the canaille must be punished and the troops sent.⁴ For this statement, there can be no justification; Pellot was quite obviously lying. The delegation had been sent to him to present Bayonne's version of the events which had so offended Pellot, nothing more.⁵

Pellot was adamant about the necessity of troops in Bayonne because he saw that city as the key to the revolt

¹Report of the town council of Bayonne, 29 April, 1665. O'Reilly, I, 501.

²Pellot to the councillors of Bayonne, 2 May, 1665. Ibid., 502.

³Pellot to Colbert, 3 May, 1665. Depping, II, 151.

⁴Pellot to Colbert, 10 May, 1665. Ibid., 89.

⁵Report of the town council of Bayonne, 7 May, 1665. O'Reilly, I, 503.

of Chalosse; if Bayonne were punished severely for its part in the revolt, Pellot was certain that the rest of the revolt would collapse.¹ He, of course, wanted to install the gabelle in Bayonne first and then proceed to Dax.

The king agreed that the troops should be sent to Bayonne but not for the purpose of establishing the gabelle. The fear of the troops' arrival prompted the Bayonnais to write to Cheverry and ask him to describe to the king the loyalty of the city. Cheverry complied,² explaining that the Basques were loyal servants of the king and that sending troops under the orders of the intendant would serve only to frighten the people into thinking that they were being sent to found the gabelle rather than to punish rebels. In any case, he maintained, the rebels could be punished as well by Bayonnais justice as by that of Pellot. Stressing their loyalty, Cheverry went on to describe the very uncertain life of the Bayonnais. The Basques were people who prized nothing so much as their freedom, since they had little else; therefore, it would be folly to send troops to the area, since they might be mistaken for the advance guard for the gabelle. Implying a threat, Cheverry stated that such an action might be pushing the loyalty of the Basques just a little too far.

On 6 July, 1665, Pellot informed Colbert that the

¹Pellot to Colbert, 10 May, 1665. Depping, III, 89.

²Cheverry to Colbert, 3 July, 1665. Ibid., 137-41.

troops for Bayonne had arrived in the province and would soon be in the city.¹ However, Cheverry's letter had not been entirely ineffective; Pellot was obliged to write to the citizens of Bayonne concerning the false rumors of the institution of the gabelle.² The arrêt from the king's conseil privé made explicit the fact that there was no intention of installing the bureau de convoi in the city and served to placate the citizens a little.

However, the Bayonnais had not been reconciled to the existence of troops who arrived on 8 August. Pellot began to receive disturbing reports about the treatment which the troops were experiencing at the hands of the merchants of the city. They sold food to the troops only at exorbitant prices and often refused to sell them anything at all. Pellot warned the citizens that the troops had been instructed by the king to live on their wages, but if this became impossible He did not need to complete the thought; the message was clear, and effective.

Pellot desired to alter the magistracy of the city of Bayonne since it seemed incapable of performing its tasks successfully. On 29 August, 1665,³ he reported that Peyrelongue, nephew of Cheverry and member of the city council of Bayonne, had visited him and recommended that the muni-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 6 July, 1665. Depping, III, 92.

²O'Reilly, I, 508.

³Pellot to Colbert, 29 August, 1665. Depping, I, 708.

cipal officers be changed or reformed. He claimed that many of the leading citizens of the city had recommended that the new mayor be appointed by the king rather than elected by the bourgeois of the city. On 2 October, 1665,¹ Pellot reported that the inhabitants of Bayonne would probably send a deputation to the king asking that the council be reformed, but later he informed Colbert that the Bayonnais had not wanted to make the necessary expenditures for such a deputation. On the basis of these reports, which evidently received credence at Paris, Pellot received an arrêt, which he sent to the inhabitants of Bayonne,² prohibiting the bourgeois from electing the new slate of municipal officers at the normal time (14 September) and ordering those in office to remain until further notice.

Pellot, attempting to take over the government of the city on behalf of the king, felt that the best way to begin was to prevent regular election of the officials. It is quite evident from the materials which O'Reilly has presented from the archives of Bayonne that most of the deputations which Pellot reported were either fictitious or presented themselves for reasons other than to demand reform of the city council. Most of the members of these deputations were also members of the council and had expressed

¹Pellot to Colbert, 2 October, 1665. Depping, I, 708.

²Pellot to the inhabitants of Bayonne, 4 September, 1665. O'Reilly, I, 511.

no such desires. It is, therefore, no surprise that the deputation, which Pellot reported would leave Bayonne on 2 October to ask the king to do something about the city council, did not leave the city. No such delegation was ever contemplated. Pellot managed to keep up the pretense until June, 1666 at which time the king sent orders that the regular election of municipal officers would be restored.¹ This has to be construed as a defeat for Pellot.

Several stories circulated throughout Guyenne about the possibility of increased participation of Bayonne in the revolt of Audijos. One of the most plausible concerned Lalande, procureur du roi. Rumour claimed that seditious elements of the population intended to assassinate the influential and wealthy inhabitants of Bayonne, take possession of both of the châteaux and turn over the city to Audijos, who would negotiate with either England or Spain for protection. Just such action had long been feared by the king which explains why Bayonne was so well treated during most of the reign of Louis XIV. One of the rebels whom Pellot had caught and interrogated, named Courtin, and who claimed to be a close associate of Audijos, informed Pellot that he had made an agreement with Audijos to supply men and money from the city of Bayonne. The money definitely was collected from that city, although whether it was extorted or freely given cannot be determined. Upon the cap-

¹Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 5 June, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 518.

ture of Courtin, more than two hundred men had fled Bayonne, thereby indicating their guilt.¹ One man who did not flee was Lalande; he believed that there was no proof implicating him in the conspiracy. Pellot stated that he had long suspected the loyalty of Lalande who had been acquainted with all of the conspirators and whom Pellot knew to have a lust for power. The capture of an entire city would, he believed, be a plan suited to Lalande's taste. Pellot recommended that, since his guilt could not be proven, a lettre de cachet be sent ordering his exile in order that those who feared Lalande might be encouraged to speak more freely regarding the conspiracy.

From Courtin, Pellot learned of the activities of Plantier, the chief fund raiser and crusader for Audijos. He had made several trips to Bayonne to recount the exploits of Audijos and convince the people to support him, particularly the artisans and wealthier inhabitants who would give the party not only money but also a certain degree of respectability. Plantier had done this work so well that there were at least fifty to sixty inhabitants of Bayonne in the pro-Audijos faction, all of whom could summon a large number of men to his cause. This, at any rate, was the story told by Courtin.² It is quite obvious that Audijos had much support in Bayonne; yet, since he feared to

¹Pellot to Colbert, 29 August, 1665. Depping, III, 102-3.

²Pellot to Colbert, 12 September, 1665. Ibid., 106.

enter the city, there must have been some in Bayonne who remained loyal to the crown or were afraid of the consequences of open rebellion.¹ None of the residents had informed Pellot of the existence of the many plots against the gabelle; yet Audijos feared someone.

The amnesty which Pellot drafted late in 1665 applied to Bayonne as well as Chalosse and Béarn. Pellot had been slow in drafting it because he had had to await the decision of the Bayonnais concerning the names of those who were to be exempted from the general pardon.² Just before the amnesty was finally published in January 1666, however, a great cry rose from Bayonne. The wording of the amnesty implied a general guilt of all citizens of Bayonne. It read, "amnesty to the advantage of the city of Bayonne"³ and the Bayonnais wanted it to mention only, "of the people guilty of crimes committed during the recent disorders".⁴ The point was not a minor one. As was pointed out, this wording would prejudice the king in later dealings with the city, since it would imply the guilt of all of its citizens.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 12 September, 1665. Depping, III, 106.

²Pellot to Colbert, 16 November, 1665. Ibid., 114.

³Report of the town council of Bayonne, 16 January, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 514.

"amnistie au profit de la ville de Bayonne."

⁴Report of the town council of Bayonne, 16 January, 1666. Ibid.

"des coupables des crimes ariuéés ès désordres deniers."

Pellot was quick to attempt to allay the fears expressed in Bayonne. On 22 January, 1666,¹ he informed the city councillors that it would be impossible to change the wording of the pardon, but that that should not alarm them because the amnesty was obviously intended only for the culprits, not those who may have been innocent. This did not satisfy the Bayonnais who decided to send a delegation to Bordeaux to prevent registration of the amnesty until such time as Pellot deleted the offending passage.² Their objections were overruled and the amnesty went into effect with the passage intact.

This minor victory for Pellot was accompanied by a defeat of much greater importance. On 2 October, 1665, Pellot informed Colbert that the royal defences in Bayonne ought to be strengthened.³ Of the two châteaux in the city, the older one, occupied by Gramont and garrisoned by two companies of infantry, had an exit leading out of the city whereas the newer one, which Pellot believed to be the more important, had only one company of infantry and no free exit from the city. His suggestion was that the newer château be better garrisoned and that a free exit be constructed in order that royal troops could enter and leave

¹Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 22 January, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 514.

²Report of the town council of Bayonne, 29 January, 1666. Ibid., 515-16.

³Pellot to Colbert, 2 October, 1665. Depping, I, 709.

the city regardless of the attitude of the inhabitants of Bayonne.

Colbert and the king not only agreed to the construction of the fausse porte (unhindered exit from the city) but went further and authorized the expansion of the château.¹ Once more the city councillors complained about the expansion of royal authority into areas where it could only be detrimental to the king's subjects. They immediately deputized all people whom they felt would aid their resistance to the fausse porte. In addition, they asked the intendant to forego the new plans; if he could not give up the plans completely, they asked that he at least grant a delay in order that they could send a deputation to the king.² Pellot replied on 22 January, 1666³ that the king had not changed his mind about the fausse porte, as the engineer demonstrated on 29 January⁴ when he arrived with a lettre de cachet ordering Bayonne to permit him to begin construction immediately.

The Bayonnais fought even the letter de cachet, halting the commencement of the work until they could send a deputation to Pellot. Pellot consulted the king who

¹Report of the town council of Bayonne, 30 November, 1665. O'Reilly, I, 512.

²Town council of Bayonne to Colbert, 30 November, 1665. Ibid., 513.

³Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 22 January, 1666. Ibid., 514.

⁴Report of the town council of Bayonne, 29 January, 1666. Ibid., 515.

found nothing in the arguments of the Bayonnais which ought to prevent the proposed construction. Pellot informed the city of the king's decision and ordered that no more delays be placed in the engineer's path.¹ However, a new deputation to Paris produced different results, and Pellot was forced to write to the councillors that he would order Fauas (or Favas), the engineer, to suspend all construction until further orders from the king.² Finally, on 5 June, 1666,³ Pellot had to inform the Bayonnais that all work on the new château would be halted.

It is not difficult to understand how the king reached this new decision when one considers the power of Gramont. This last struggle ended the serious attempts of Pellot to deprive Bayonne of at least some of its extensive power and autonomy. Once more, circumstances beyond the control of Pellot, beyond even that of the king, prevented the crown from acting to its own benefit. Even had Gramont not been so powerful, the possibility of revolt in Bayonne would have forced the king to concede this issue. The worst of the Audijos revolt had passed at this time (June 1666) but there was much to come, and Pellot had already demonstrated to the king the extent of disloyalty.

¹Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 19 February, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 516-17.

²Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 3 March, 1666. Ibid., 517.

³Pellot to the town council of Bayonne, 5 June, 1666. Ibid., 518.

Leon Bernard attempts to analyse the Audijos revolt (or revolt of Chalosse) in terms of the recent Porchnev-Mousnier controversy.¹ As Bernard states, Porchnev treats the constant uprisings in France before the period of the Fronde in the Marxist class-warfare sense, although Porchnev also admits that occasionally this scheme broke down when one class temporarily allied itself with its natural enemy to advance common interests. Mousnier regards the uprisings as a common front action against the centralized government.²

Bernard's study analyses five major post-Fronde revolts in the light of the Porchnev-Mousnier conflict. Among the revolts discussed is that of Chalosse which, he attempts to demonstrate, was strictly a lower class movement.³ Most of those involved in the actual uprisings were from the canaille, Bernard asserts, and, since Pellot could only "point the finger" at the higher classes, it was apparent that they were not involved. However, Pellot's own account of the involvement of Gramont's men undermines Bernard's argument, nor must one ignore the assistance which all citizens of Béarn, regardless of so-

¹Leon Bernard, "French Society and Popular Uprisings under Louis XIV," French Historical Studies, III, no. 4, (Fall, 1964) 454-74. See also Boris Porchnev, Les Soulèvements populaires en France de 1623 à 1648. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963, and Roland Mousnier, "Recherches sur les soulèvements populaires en France avant la Fronde," R.H.M.C., V (1958), 81-113.

²Bernard, "French Society and Popular Uprisings under Louis XIV," 456.

³Ibid., 460-62.

cial class, gave to Audijos. These two cases alone would be sufficient to dispel the illusion of a strictly peasant revolt, but there is a third example of participation on the part of the upper classes. According to Bernard, the town fathers of Bayonne had learned that Audijos' men were in the city; these fearful and loyal citizens, therefore, informed Pellot of that fact and asked that troops be sent to quell the restive elements, thereby demonstrating their non-involvement in the revolt.¹ They also asked that changes be made in the Hôtel de ville. The weakness of Bernard's position in this case is that he did not obtain the material from the archives of Bayonne published by O'Reilly. As has already been demonstrated,² the mayor of the city was responsible for the poor treatment received by the two men Pellot had sent to capture rebels in Bayonne and the only assistance given to Pellot's men was to aid their exit from the city. In addition, Bernard has accepted Pellot's word that the town fathers actually requested that troops be sent to Bayonne, and, as proven above, Pellot was lying in this case.³ Thus, the analysis of the revolt of Chalosse offered by Bernard lacks adequate foundation.⁴

In this case, Mousnier's interpretation of the earlier revolt provides a reasonable method of analysis. The revolt of Chalosse was a joint effort of all classes resisting the augmentation of royal authority. Of course

¹Bernard, "French society and Popular Uprisings under Louis XIV," 461.

²See 62-64 above.

³See 60 above.

⁴One of the sources cited by Bernard is A. Communay,

Gramont and the upper classes of Chalosse did not actually take the field against the troops of Louis XIV, but they did allow others to do so, perhaps even encouraging them in this activity and they certainly did not assist Pellot in quelling the sedition. The town fathers of Bayonne had little to gain by the presence of the troops and much to lose, to wit, local liberties and the imposition of the gabelle. (There were, of course, some members of the upper class in Bayonne who feared the consequences of the revolt; they remained loyal but did little to assist the royal officials.) The lower classes had everything to lose since the gabelle was the most hated of all the taxes in Guyenne. Nor did they wish to give up the few privileges which they had acquired over the centuries.

Thus, Mousnier's common front against the centralized government seems to be valid in the case of the revolt of Chalosse; however, this does not preclude altogether the analysis of Porchnev. It is quite possible that this revolt fits into the category of a revolt in which the normal class conflicts disappeared in the face of a common threat, in this case, the gabelle. In Bayonne, this union of nobility, bourgeois and commoners did not outlive the revolt.

Audijos: La Gabelle en Gascogne. Paris: 1893. This book is a collection of unedited documents to which Communay added an introduction. It is his opinion that,

...du jour ou l'on vit le fermier, d'accord avec l'intendant, procéder à main armée à l'installation des bureaux, l'entente générale se fit aussitôt dans le pays: le paysan, le bourgeois, le gentilhomme, tous entrèrent de plein coeur dans la coalition. Un chef expert et résolu manquait: Audijos se présenta: il fut aussitôt reconnu et acclamé. (iii-iv)

CHAPTER II

COMMERCE AND JUSTICE

Commerce

In the era of the great mercantilistic policies of Colbert,¹ it is strange that there are few references in the collections of documents to anything commercial, at least so far as Pellot is concerned. Since there is a dearth of source material, one must assume that Pellot obeyed, in part at least, the instructions sent by Colbert to all maîtres des requêtes and intendants.² The instructions included all facets of administration and will be quoted from time to time in the thesis where relevant. The section of the instructions dealing with commerce, industry, and trade is relatively brief considering the importance which Colbert attached to these subjects.³

¹C.W. Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.

²Colbert to the maîtres des requêtes and intendants, September, 1663. Clément, IV, 27-43.

³The exhaustive study by Cole, cited above, is, for all its defects, still the most useful work treating Colbert's policies and activities with regard to commerce. See also Henri Sée, L'évolution commerciale et

Concerning commerce, Colbert and the king were interested in two facts: (1) what changes had developed in the last forty to fifty years in the internal trade patterns and the sorts of goods manufactured, and (2) whether there had been established some trade with foreign countries in the same time interval, whether the trade had diminished and, if so, why and how could it be re-established. If some forms of manufacturing had been abolished, Colbert wanted to know why and whether they could be re-established.¹

With this emphasis on trade and manufacturing, Colbert went on to stress the importance of a large merchant marine. The intendants, therefore, were instructed to ascertain the number of vessels in each généralité; in addition, they were to encourage merchants to buy more ships and to form navigation companies for long journeys. The

industrielle de la France sous l'ancien régime. Paris: M. Giard, 1925; Stewart Mims, Colbert's West India Policy, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912; and Prosper Boissonnade, Colbert et la compagnie du Nord (1661-1689). Paris: M. Rivière, 1930.

¹Clément, IV, 39.

king undertook to protect those of his subjects who promised to do so in order to increase the amount of commerce and the number of vessels in the realm.¹

Nor were manufactures to receive any less attention from the intendants. Those manufactures which had disappeared from an area were to be restored and new ones established. Since this was of such importance to the king, Colbert informed the intendants that any city which seemed inclined to obey the requests of the king, but was unable to do so because of lack of funds, not only would receive the protection of the king, but also would be assisted financially both to restore old industries and to increase the size of others. The function of the intendants in this scheme was not merely to transmit the king's orders to each généralité and to encourage obedience; they were the agents of the king who decided if an area was sufficiently destitute and enthusiastic about increasing manufactures to warrant assistance from the king. Having reached their verdicts, they would submit the evidence to the king and Colbert who would make the final decisions.²

The most important commercial matters which concerned Pellot were the establishment of the various companies which Colbert hoped would expand the trade of France. In 1664, Colbert managed to coerce merchants and

¹Clément, IV, 40.

²Ibid.

financiers into forming the French East India Company, which, he hoped, would break the Dutch monopoly in the East.

The formation of the company depended upon the investment of large sums of money by many people, almost none of whom would have invested had they been given a choice. Pellot was one of the agents of Colbert who spent great amounts of time encouraging people to realize they had no choice. Colbert ordered him to obtain funds for the French East India Company from the inhabitants of the coastal regions of Guyenne, particularly Bayonne and Bordeaux. The kind of argument he encountered is well illustrated by the reply of the jurats (municipal officers) of Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Sibourre. Although the king could not possibly doubt the loyalty of his subjects in these two areas, their letter read,¹ they were sad to have to report that they were in such financial straits that it was doubtful that they could even keep their fishing vessels afloat, considering the ravages to shipping which had occurred during the recent wars. The ships which they did have were all either fishing off Newfoundland or whaling in the north; however, even if the catch were good, the financial position of his majesty's subjects in Sibourre and Saint-Jean-de-Luz was not likely to improve because of a ban imposed on marketing the catch. The jurats concluded

¹Jurats of Saint-Jean-de-Luz to Colbert, 15 July, 1664. Depping, III, 354-5.

their argument by turning the tables on the king: since conditions were so poor in their territory, would it be possible for the king to grant them some relief from their financial problems? There is no record of the East India Company receiving support from these areas.

One of the areas which proved most reluctant to invest in the société des Indes orientales was the city of Bordeaux. Learning of this intransigent attitude, Pellot suggested to Colbert¹ a method of encouraging a more favourable climate of opinion towards the Company. Not wishing to deprive the Bordelais of any privileges which the king gave to other cities, Pellot suggested the removal of a privilege which was peculiar to Bordeaux -- the droit de bourgeois. This right permitted some bourgeois to avoid paying the taille, or at least part of it. If threats were made that this right might be rescinded, the Bordelais would be more than happy to invest in His Majesty's Company.

Colbert had not decided on the droit de bourgeois by the time Pellot reached Bordeaux in order to apply direct pressure, but this did not prevent Pellot from threatening the removal of the droit. He met with Pontac, premier président du parlement de Bordeaux, and the latter

¹Pellot to Colbert, 3 October, 1664. Depping, III, 72.

wrote to Colbert¹ assuring him that he was doing his utmost to encourage the jurats to contribute. He stated that after the visit he had had with Pellot, he had spoken to the chief of the Bourse (le juge de la Bourse) asking him to urge the merchants and traders to invest in the société. The latter official agreed to see what he could do but he added that the best way to ensure large numbers of participants was for the king to guarantee to those who paid more than 4,000 or 5,000 livres the droit de bourgeois. Pontac again spoke to the chief of the Bourse and the jurats² and was optimistic about their eventual co-operation.

Pellot prompted Pontac to speak more harshly to the bourgeoisie of Bordeaux about the possibility of losing the droit de bourgeois unless contributions were forthcoming.³ On 17 November, 1664, the parlement having opened in Bordeaux, Pontac wasted no time in bringing to its attention the existence and needs of the East India Company. He believed that the parlement would do its duty by contributing a large sum. He also reported that the bourgeois and the jurats had no sooner shown signs of great zeal for the Company than the Dutch captured many vessels of the

¹Pontac to Colbert, 24 October, 1664. Depping, III, 358-9.

²Pontac to Colbert, 7 November, 1664. Ibid., 259.

³Pontac to Colbert, 10 November, 1664. Ibid., 360.

merchants of Bordeaux, thereby limiting the ability of these individuals to invest.¹ Whether this had occurred is nearly impossible to ascertain, but there is little doubt that Pellot would have attempted to verify such information.

Another difficulty which Pellot and Pontac encountered in collecting contributions to the Company was the attempt of the members of the cour des aides of Bordeaux to avoid paying as much as they ought. Instead of paying as individuals in the cour des aides, the members were intending to pay under the name of the procureur général of that court. Since the number of members of the institution was probably unknown to the king and Colbert, the lump sum which it would contribute would be less than the full imposition of 1,000 livres per member. This, at any rate, was the theory and it might have worked had Pontac not spotted the ruse.²

Pellot at this time was doing more than exhorting Pontac to greater efforts. He had the unenviable task of coercing the wealthiest men in the area. On 17 November, 1664, he informed Colbert of the type of resistance which was offered by these men.³ One man (receveur général of

¹Pontac to Colbert, 26 November, 1664. Depping, III, 361.

²Pontac to Colbert, 28 November, 1664. Ibid., 361-2.

³Pellot to Colbert, 17 November, 1664. Ibid., 362, note 1.

Bordeaux) argued that since he had already contributed to the West India Company, he was exempt from any duty with regard to the new one. Pellot rejected such an argument on the grounds that if such an influential man were permitted to evade investing in the new company then others would emulate his example. As is so often the case, the outcome of this dispute is unknown.

In Montauban, Pellot had been unable to collect any money; he, therefore, wrote to Saint-Luc asking assistance. Saint-Luc (lieutenant-général in Guyenne) wrote to the inhabitants of Montauban¹ castigating their disloyalty and warning them of the disgrace which would be their lot if they did not invest. Nor were the Huguenots exempt from inclusion in the Company. Pontac reported² that the chambre de l'Edit of the R.P.R.³ would be willing to contribute to the king's cause and liberally at that.

Finally in 1665⁴ the collection of the money from the bourgeois was about to begin. How much of it actually was collected in Pellot's districts is unknown, but the total promised subscription for the whole kingdom was

¹Saint-Luc to the inhabitants of Montauban, 5 January, 1665. Depping, III, 363, note 1.

²Pontac to Colbert, 8 December, 1664. Ibid.

³R.P.R. is the standard abbreviation for religion prétendue réformée which was the name given to the Huguenots and their faith.

⁴Pontac to Colbert, 16 February, 1665. Depping, III, 363, note 1.

8,200,000 livres of which only about one-half was collected.¹ Considering the general resistance to authority which continually manifested itself in Guyenne, there is little reason to assume that it remitted all it had promised.

The company fared very poorly when it finally did begin trading, not sending out its first fleet until 1666. This fleet did not return until 1669 and paid only a very small dividend. Although the prospects began to improve, the Dutch war put an end to any gains the company had made. The operation may have had some advantageous aspects as far as France was concerned, but the stock holders did not agree.² With the disappointing returns on their money, it is little wonder that many of the investors wished to sever all connections with the company. Such was the case of the members of the parlement of Bordeaux.

In 1669³ Pellot relayed the complaint of the parlement of Bordeaux that it was being discriminated against in the matter of the droit annuel (the paulette). From the limited information available one can piece together the story. The king had made an important concession to the parlement in return for investment in the société des

¹S.B. Clough and C.W. Cole, Economic History of Europe. Boston: Heath & Co., 1941, 330.

²Ibid.

³Pellot to Colbert, 5 April, 1669. Depping, III, 415-6.

Indes orientales, permitting the councillors to forgo payment of the paulette for a specified time. The payments to the company were to be in three installments, the second of which fell due in 1669. In the original agreement, the councillors had been promised the right to withdraw from the company if they were willing to consider the first payment as lost. However, in 1669 the king's officers were forcing the councillors to make the second payment without the recourse to the option. Should the councillors wish to withdraw from the company, they were also to be permitted to recommence payments of the droit annuel in order to ensure the inheritance of the office to their families. But the king would neither let them sever connections with the company, nor would he reinstate them in their rights to the paulette.

They demanded, therefore, that they be allowed to recommence payments of the paulette and at the same time to cease payments to the East India Company. Pellot sent the request to Colbert suggesting that if the king could not agree to all the demands of the parlement, he might consider permitting the councillors to make partial payment of the money they had promised to the company, thereby allowing them reinstatement in the rights to the paulette.¹

The French East India Company stirred no more interest in Bayonne than it had in Bordeaux or Sibourre.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 5 April, 1669. Depping, III, 416.

Again coercion would be necessary if Pellot were to gain any Bayonnais converts to the company. Whereas Bordeaux could be threatened with the loss of the droit de bourgeois, Bayonne was susceptible in the area of customs, of which the king had already attached one-half to the royal domain. Pellot reported that the Bayonnais had approached him hoping to regain the lost half of the customs. Noting that they had not contributed to the company, Pellot recommended that Colbert offer to return the other half of the customs on the condition that money for the company be forthcoming. The Bayonnais had given Pellot no reply at the time he wrote the letter¹ but said they would deliberate and inform him of their decision. This decision was obviously negative; in fact, if the report which the échevins (aldermen) of Bayonne submitted to Pellot² is accurate, there was ample justification for declaring Bayonne a disaster area: although the inhabitants of the area had been willing to invest in the company, several events had occurred which made the fulfillment of the king's wishes impossible. The letter is so typical that it would not be amiss to quote it in part:

But the cessation of trade with Dax [The institution of the gabelle in Dax apparently hampered trade, if it did not stop it altogether], the interruption of that with Holland and England by the wars which have developed so unexpectedly, the danger of travelling to Canada and

¹Pellot to Colbert, 3 November, 1664. Depping, III, 77-8.

²The echévins of Bayonne to Pellot, 4 August, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 568-9.

Norway, the lack of specie preventing trade with Spain; the fifty sous per ton, [import and export tax on shipping of foreign goods]¹ preventing the import of wool to Bayonne; the decrease of trade generally brought about by losses to the English of Bayonnais ships, and the death of several merchants of Bayonne prevent us from finding the means to do what our inclination and duty towards the king persuade us to do.²

In 1669 Colbert encouraged merchants to establish a Compagnie du Nord to compete with the monopoly which the Dutch had established in the carrying trade in the Baltic. The company would be expected to open trade with Russia which, measured by its size alone, seemed to be a good market for French manufactured goods. In addition, Colbert was interested in procuring tar and masts for the new merchant marine and navy which he was building. The company was ruined by the Dutch wars and folded in 1684.³

¹The Bayonnais had already launched a formal complaint about the existence of the import tax of fifty sous per ton in 1663.

Echévins, jurats et conseil de la ville de Bayonne to Colbert, 19 October, 1663. Depping, III, 342.

This was another unsuccessful attempt to try to eliminate it.

²Echévins of Bayonne to Pellot, 4 August, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 158.

" . . . Mais la cessation du négoce avec Dax, l' interruption de celui de Hollande et d'Angleterre par les guerres qui sont suruenues; le danger d'enuoyer en Terre-neufve et Norouege; le rabbais des especes quy a faict aussy cesser le négoce d'Espagne; les cinquante sols par thonneau quy empeschent le transport des laynes en cette ville; le reffroidissem^t gen^l du comm^e, avec les pertes arriuées sur les prises que les anglais ont faict à plusieurs de nos habitants; la mort de quelques autres, nous ostent le moien de pouuoir f^e ce que nostre inclination et nostre deuoir enuers Sa Majesté nous persuadent"

³Clough and Cole, Economic History of Europe, 331.

Once again Pellot was burdened with the task of acquiring funds from the Bordelais for the new commercial venture. This proved even more difficult than it had been for the East India Company, if only because the people of Guyenne had already had some unpleasant experiences with the state-managed trade company for the development and exploitation of the East Indies. The Bordelais had been reluctant to contribute to that first venture, and they were almost rebellious when approached about the Company of the North. In order to make his task a little easier when he finally arrived in Bordeaux, Pellot had charged a man named Lombard to speak on his behalf to the main merchants of the city.¹ (Pellot was in Agen at the time.) This would at least break the ground.

In any case, the fact that Colbert had not sent any specifics concerning the new company rendered Pellot's task nearly impossible. On 15 February, 1669, Pellot, having arrived in Bordeaux, asked that Colbert send him the necessary information as soon as possible. Although he had created some interest in the company, even that was beginning to wane due to lack of specific information. Pellot also accused the inhabitants of La Rochelle of attempting to scuttle Bordelais participation in the company.² The Rochellais apparently wanted to keep most of

¹Pellot to Colbert, January, 1669. Depping, III, 412.

²Pellot to Colbert, 15 February, 1669. Ibid., 412.

the control of the company in their own city in order to derive maximum benefits from it. The fear was that if the new company were advantageous to La Rochelle, it could not possibly be of any value to Bordeaux. The Bordelais were convinced that all of the shipping would pass through La Rochelle and none of it through Bordeaux.¹ For the most part, these were merely excuses offered by the inhabitants of Bordeaux in order to avoid participation.

That Pellot continued to exert himself on behalf of the Company of the North is incontestable, but, as he put it, things were going a bit slowly.² One example of the trouble he had with individuals is the case of Fontrailles, a gentleman who wrote to Pellot that he was too poor to be expected to engage in this commerce. He added that if he had as much money as Pellot managed to extract from the king, he would be more than happy to participate. Pellot's reply was that the money he acquired from the king was spent in his service and that considering the manner of life of Fontrailles, it was apparent that he had more money left over at the end of the year than did the intendant.³ It is not known whether the man did contribute to the venture.

As with the East India Company, Pellot was forced

¹Pellot to Colbert, 5 April, 1669. Depping, III, 415.

²Pellot to Colbert, 5 April, 1669. Ibid., 414.

³Ibid., note 1.

to employ devious means in order to coerce promises from groups and individuals. He suggested that Dejean and Duribaut, two of the richest men in Bordeaux, be encouraged by withholding the grant of noble status which had been promised them. This threat must have struck home because the two men were attempting to obtain an interview with Pellot, which the latter refused to grant until they had first paid 3,000 livres each. In addition, Dejean was one of the directors of the compagnie d'Orient (the East India Company); Pellot suggested that he be displaced if he did not invest in the Company of the North and asked for orders to that effect which he would use only if necessary.¹

Chaneuas, the maître des courriers de Bordeaux, had contributed only 2,000 livres in spite of the fact that he had no family and had at least 400,000 to 500,000 livres, most of which he had earned as the maître des courriers or from the bank in the city in which he had an interest. Since the post of maître des courriers was a very lucrative one, and since its occupant could be displaced by the sur-intendant général des postes (who, from 1668-72 was Louvois), Pellot recommended that Louvois be persuaded to write to Chaneuas strongly urging the latter's participation in the commercial venture, to the extent of, perhaps, 6,000 or 8,000 livres. This, Pellot believed, could not fail to produce desirable results.²

¹Pellot to Colbert, 12 April, 1669. Depping, III, 416.

²Pellot to Colbert, 12 April, 1669. Ibid., 416-17.

Others to whom Pellot looked for contributions were: the Portuguese population of Bordeaux, most of whom, he was convinced, were Jews; various friends and associates who were indebted to him for personal favours rendered in his capacity as intendant; and several communities which he felt were affluent enough to be able to afford to participate, such as Bigorre and Foix. He did have success with the Portuguese but there is no information available concerning the others.

Once again, he raised the spectre of the loss of the droit de bourgeoisie in Bordeaux, which, he believed, would help to fill the coffers of the company. Colbert had merely to send the order and it would be executed quickly and easily.

The conseil du roi finally published an arrêt which obliged the bourgeois of Bordeaux to invest in the Company of the North; however, the bourgeois were not at all pleased with this development.¹ According to Pellot, they were planning to send a deputation to the king to protest that the arrêt infringed on their rights as bourgeois, which Pellot considered to be false. He pointed out that the Bordelais were quick to deputize and that such deputations had cost the inhabitants of the area 40,000 to 50,000 livres in the previous eight or ten years, most of which had been wasted on useless causes. He, therefore,

¹Pellot to Colbert, 24 June, 1669. Depping, III, 418.

suggested that they henceforth be prohibited from deputizing. Whether they were so prohibited is impossible to determine from the documents available, but if they were, their cause was considered unjust.

By 5 July, 1669, Pellot had received the instructions he had requested which permitted him to deny the droit de bourgeoisie to any bourgeois who contributed less than 1,000 livres.¹ This caused such great unrest, he reported, that it would not be possible for him to leave Bordeaux until the city was again calm. There had not been any violence to that time, but he was not ruling out the possibility. By 5 July, Pellot had been in Bordeaux for a full six months, probably the longest stay in any city during his entire intendency. Most of this time had been spent coercing citizens into spending money on the Company of the North which was to collapse in a very short time.

The fact that he spent his time only in Bordeaux does not mean, however, that he devoted his attention solely to that city. Although he received no instructions to write to other coastal cities, he took it upon himself to do so in order to increase the contribution of Guyenne to the trading company which would tap the resources of the Baltic. Bayonne was Pellot's major target but it would seem that his energies might have been better spent elsewhere. Pellot described the new company in the most glow-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 5 July, 1669. Depping, III, 419.

ing terms¹ but the Bayonnais were none the less aggrieved to have to reply that the various calamities and catastrophies which had befallen them (such as the War of Devolution 1667-68 and the series of ship-wrecks which their merchants had undergone) rendered them incapable of investing any money at all.²

Both the East India Company and the Company of the North did actually begin operations, but much of the activity must be attributed to the fact that to the first company the king contributed one-half of the funds and to the second, one-quarter. Many of the promised contributions did not materialize and those which did were slow and difficult to collect.

The only documented case of protection of industry with which Pellot concerned himself is that of the manufacture of goderon (pleated lace). On 3 October, 1664,³ Pellot wrote to Colbert that he had forbidden the fermiers of the duc de Foix to collect any taxes on the manufacture of goderon; in addition, he insisted that any taxes previously collected be restored. Henceforth, the manufacture of goderon and the peasants who worked with it would be protected from all exactions.

¹Pellot to the inhabitants of Bayonne, 22 January, 1669. O'Reilly, I, 569-70.

²The échevins of Bayonne to Pellot, 16 February, 1669. Ibid., 570-71.

³Pellot to Colbert, 3 October, 1664. Depping, III, 72.

Although Colbert had included in his general instructions of 1663¹ detailed orders to revive industry in each généralité by protecting manufacturers and by other means, only in this isolated case does it appear that Pellot acted upon Colbert's instructions. Of course, being the intendant of Montauban and Guyenne presented difficulties which diverted his attention to other matters; nevertheless, one wonders at Pellot's lack of enthusiasm.

One of the most hotly-contested economic questions of the seventeenth century was the issue of free trade versus protection. This was a vital issue in the agricultural industry because the periodic famines and shortages rendered useless any attempts on the part of Colbert to overcome local resistance to free trade. Of course, even Colbert would not advocate free trade of wheat during a shortage, but when all was relatively well, he felt that trading wheat for foreigners' gold was good mercantilistic policy. Another obstacle which had to be overcome if France ever were going to achieve economic integration was the system of local tariffs which inhibited trade from province to province and often between even smaller units. Colbert wished to destroy the local and provincial barriers to trade and to put all customs duties in the hands of royal officials. This, he hoped, would increase royal revenue while decreasing inefficiency in collection methods. The

¹See p. 3-7.

only section of the country which had eliminated the problem was the Cinq Grosses Fermes which incorporated a large part of Northern and Central France. This area was one great free trade area, but taxes still were imposed on goods from other areas in France. Probably the worst treated in this respect were the areas of Guyenne, Béarn and Bayonne.

Pellot was involved in the struggle to unify the customs tax scheme of Bordeaux and Montauban even before he became the intendant of Bordeaux. As intendant of Montauban, he naturally wanted his généralité to prosper as much as possible. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that he directed Colbert's attention to the question of free passage of wheat through Bordeaux from Montauban. Bordeaux had long exercised the right to impound wheat shipped down the Garonne upon payment to the shipper of the average price of wheat for the previous three years. Having procured nearly all of Guyenne's wheat crop, the merchants of Bordeaux could then sell it abroad or at home at a good profit. Colbert was made aware of the plight of the merchants of Montauban, probably through the letters of Pellot, and requested Lejay, intendant of Bordeaux, to conduct an inquiry into the basis for the rights which the Bordelais were claiming.¹

The key to the move to clear the Garonne of impedi-

¹Colbert to Lejay, 15 May, 1663. Depping, III, 26-7.

ments to shipping is to be found in a letter to Lejay written on 7 June, 1663.¹

Since travel through Bordeaux is not free, the inhabitants of Languedoc and Upper Guyenne complain daily to the king that they are unable to market their produce and therefore are unable to pay their taxes
[emphasis mine]

Colbert never forgot the coffers of the king; the king never gave him a chance to do so.

After much insistence, Colbert finally managed to force Lejay to do his duty and carry out the inquiry he had demanded. By July, 1663, Lejay had sent enough information to Colbert that the latter could analyse the arguments of the jurats of Bordeaux who claimed special rights for the city. The pretexts on which the jurats based their claim were found wanting and the king decided to take away the privileges or, at least, to alter them drastically. Previously, the Bordelais had had the right to retain one-third of the wheat which was shipped down the Garonne, a privilege they had badly abused. Since the privileges were founded on insufficient grounds² and had been abused over the years, Colbert felt that he was being more than fair by permitting the following settlement: the king had

¹Colbert to Lejay, 7 June, 1663. Clément, IV, 207.
"Mais comme le Roy reçoit tous les jours des plaintes de ses sujets du Languedoc et de la haute Guyenne de ce que, le passage n'estant pas libre, ils ne peuvent débiter leurs denrees, et par conséquent payer la taille"

²Colbert to Lejay, 13 July, 1663. Ibid., 215-16.

decided that the Bordelais could retain one-third of the wheat only in times of well-authenticated shortage. Once the shortage was verified, the king would issue an arrêt in favour of the Bordelais.¹ At all other times, the passage of wheat along the Garonne was to be unhindered.

The Bordelais were dissatisfied but they dared not complain about the king's decision, at least not directly. The new ruling went into effect immediately (July) and the Bordelais were quick to object to the results. On 25 September, 1663, Colbert wrote to Pellot² saying that the transport of wheat through Bordeaux was completely free and that he had this information on the undoubted word of Pontac, the first president of the parlement of Bordeaux. This same source also reported the unrest in Bordeaux of the merchants and others who were bemoaning the rise in grain prices due to the loss of their special privileges. Colbert was not prepared to reject these complaints out of hand and therefore instructed Pellot to co-operate with Pontac and Lejay in conducting an investigation of the effects of the free passage of grain on its price. If the argument of the Bordelais was valid, Pellot was to find a method of resolving the dilemma in such a way that Bordeaux could be satisfied while at the same time assuring the potential of Montauban to pay the taille.

¹Colbert to Lejay, 13 July, 1663. Clément, IV, 215-16.

²Colbert to Pellot, 25 September, 1663. Depping, III, 341-42.

One assumes that Pellot and the others decided that the doubts which were raised in Bordeaux were not substantiated since there is no more to be found on the subject in the documents. Since Pellot exercised the double function of the intendant of Montauban and Bordeaux for six years, it is unlikely that the documents would have remained silent on the subject had the issue not been settled.

In any case, a letter written by Pellot on another occasion about the dangers of shortage caused by free trade would tend to support the hypothesis that he entertained little sympathy for the argument of the merchants of Bordeaux. In 1669, an arrêt du conseil¹ authorizing the export of grain without duties provoked hasty protests from the citizens of Bayonne. Pellot reported² that the échevins and jurats of Bayonne had written to him stating that they would not publish the arrêt until they received word from him that it was genuine; they objected that the arrêt would cause high prices and a shortage of grains in the area. Pellot replied immediately that they were to implement the arrêt and that their objections were without any sort of foundation. This was one of the few occasions on which Pellot appears to have acted without first consulting Colbert.

¹Arrêt du conseil autorisant la sortie des blés, 20 May, 1669. Clément, IV, 593-4.

²Pellot to Colbert, 24 June, 1669. Depping, III, 418-19.

Justice

Pellot was an intendant of justice, finance and police, and as such, was deeply involved in judicial matters while serving in Guyenne. The most troubled area of judicial activity was the conflict with the sovereign courts, particularly the cours des aides of Montauban and of Bordeaux. These courts were tribunals which had jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, over all matters relating to the various taxes, such as the taille, the gabelle, and aides. Of course, they were extremely jealous of their rights in these matters which explains the conflict between them and the intendant. Pellot was interested in efficient administration and the courts had proved themselves somewhat less than perfect in this regard.

The personnel of the cour des aides of Montauban was a subject of great concern to Pellot, whereas, the personnel of the présidiaux appeared to him to be efficient and loyal servants of the king. The présidiaux were courts, established in the sixteenth century, designed to lighten the load of the cours des aides by judging cases in which relatively small amounts of money were involved. Disliking the cours des aides of Montauban as he did, Pellot, on arriving in that city, wasted no time in promoting the expansion of powers of the présidial of Montauban.

The first major confrontation between the présidial¹

¹The cour des aides of Montauban to Colbert, 30 May, 1663. Depping, II, 10-12.

and the cour des aides took place in May, 1663. On this occasion the court complained of the injustice to itself perpetrated by La Cheze, a councillor in the présidial and premier consul (that is, mayor) of Montauban, who had unjustly imprisoned its clerk. The clerk had been sent to convey a letter of évocation (transfer, granted by the king's council, of jurisdiction from one court to another) removing a case from the présidial to the cour des aides. La Cheze was so angered by this action that he had had the clerk placed in irons, and then had appealed his case to Pellot, who wrote to Paris in his favour. The cour des aides objected to interference of the intendant on the grounds that he was not competent in these affairs. They feared that if he were allowed to settle this matter, then everytime a dispute arose between the présidial and the cour des aides, Pellot would arbitrate in favour of the former. In any case, since the cour did not recognize the jurisdiction of Pellot in these affairs, it had no intention of presenting its case to him.

Pellot wrote to Séguier (Chancellor of France, 1635-1672) on this subject stating that the présidial deserved to be encouraged and protected since it was of value to the intendants and to the king whereas the cour des aides was a great expense to the province and to the people and often interfered with the collection of the tailles which were due from previous years.¹

¹Pellot to Séguier. O'Reilly, I, 380.

The cour des aides of Montauban continued to be a problem to Pellot. Originally it had been located not in Montauban, but in Cahors; however, in order to attract as many Catholics as possible to Protestant Montauban, the king ordered the councillors to meet in Montauban and to live there. By 1663 Pellot had forced the councillors to comply with the former request, but, as he reported on 25 April, 1664,¹ the councillors had refused to reside in the city. The continued resistance to this move was attributed, by Pellot, to the large number of councillors who gave each other courage. Believing the adage that in numbers there is strength, Pellot recommended that the strength of the cour des aides be diminished by reducing the number of its members. In that way, he was certain that the councillors would be less intractable. In any case, since the councillors were nearly all men whom Pellot considered to be worthless and dishonest, a decrease in their number could only be beneficial. Pellot's wishes were granted and the cour des aides was reduced.² However, Pellot was not entirely satisfied because one of the junior members of that body had suffered in the reduction. It would be an interesting test of Pellot's influence to ascertain if the man were reinstated but the documents do not permit such an examination.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 25 April, 1664. Depping, III, 135-36.

²Pellot to Séguier, 30 November, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 631.

The cour des aides of Bordeaux does not seem to have been any more co-operative than its counterpart in Montauban. In 1665,¹ l'Admirault, the president of the court complained to Colbert that the citizens of Bordeaux were so hostile to the court that they came as a mob and threw rocks at the councillors. They caused such a disturbance that he was not only obliged to postpone the session but also was obliged to send a clerk to order the jurats (municipal officers) to guarantee safe conduct and to disperse the mob. The jurats refused. The cour des aides seemed to have a rather inflated opinion of its jurisdiction; l'Admirault maintained that Colbert would force the jurats to obey the court and to appear when summoned by it concerning the affairs of the king and of the public. L'Admirault was wrong. This is a good example of the steady encroachment of power in which many institutions engaged when unchecked by the king. In fact, the cour des aides had jurisdiction only over matters concerning taxes, although in practice, it acquired very extensive powers in other realms.

Such complaints from the cour des aides of Bordeaux probably were not uncommon because Colbert finally ordered Pellot and the marquis of Saint-Luc to investigate that court. What prompted the investigation was the refusal of the court to register an edict of the king referring to the right of remonstrance which the various parlements and

¹L'Admirault to Colbert, 27 January, 1665. Depping, II, 144-45.

courts of the realm gradually had acquired. The ordinance of 1667 was registered by all courts and parlements in the realm except that of Bordeaux. Saint-Luc¹ sent the results of the enquiry, carried out by himself and Pellot, both to Colbert and to Vrillière.²

Saint-Luc repeated against the cour des aides of Bordeaux many of the charges which Pellot had levelled against that of Montauban: the people groaned under the onerous burden of supporting the court which served no useful purpose; the court was disloyal; such disobedience ought to be punished severely. According to Saint-Luc, Pellot and the trésoriers de France could perform all the duties presently carried out by the cour des aides and they would do so with a higher degree of efficiency and honesty.

Continuing his account of the refusal of the cour des aides to register the edict, Saint-Luc described the disobedience as a revolt. In fact, he had information that this revolt had an uglier side. Méthivier, the president of the court, had intrigued with his father, a councillor in the parlement of Bordeaux, in a successful attempt to assume control of the army. Méthivier's father had made himself head of the army and had attracted several

¹Saint-Luc to Colbert, 30 September, 1667. Depping, II, 173-74.

²La Vrillière was secretary of state under Louis XIV for the following areas: Languedoc, Guyenne, Touraine, Anjou, Maine, Normandy, Picardy, Burgundy, Auvergne, and for Huguenot affairs.

of the young officers to his cause. It is strange that nothing further on this subject appears in the documents and one is tempted to doubt that the resistance actually took such a drastic turn as Saint-Luc had described. Attempting to bring about the curtailment of the powers of the cour des aides, Saint-Luc had probably exaggerated the extent of the resistance, but one cannot be certain whether he was being dishonest or was simply misinformed.

The cour des aides wasted no time in coming to its own defence. On the same day as Saint-Luc wrote his letter to Colbert, the procureur général du roi à la cour des aides (public prosecutor in the sovereign courts), d'Arche, explained to Colbert¹ that there was no company more loyal to the king than the cour des aides of Bordeaux. Saint-Luc, he continued, was misrepresenting the stand of the court in stating that the cour des aides refused to obey the orders of the king. What the councillors found offensive was the manner of presentation of the edict reforming the courts. Saint-Luc had presented himself to the court as if he were greater than a prince of the blood, and the court had refused to admit him under such circumstances as it would be an offense against the dignity of the real princes of the blood. He went on to describe the indignities suffered by himself at the hands of Saint-Luc and called upon Pellot as his witness. The latter consistently supported the mar-

¹D'Arche to Colbert, 30 September, 1667. Depping, II, 180-81.

quis of Saint-Luc in this dispute although there is no record of his testifying against d'Arche in the instance of this particular insult. Pellot saw that there was more at stake than the personal affront suffered by the procureur général in the refusal of the cour des aides to register an edict. D'Arche was obviously attempting to steer the debate away from the real issue, that is, the registration of the edict, to a more personal level. The significant aspect of d'Arche's letter is not what he actually said, but rather what he chose to refrain from saying: d'Arche did not indicate that if the edict were presented anew in the manner designated by the court it would receive speedy registration.

Pellot was involved in the dispute between the Estates of Bigorre and the marquis of Antin over the issue of which type of judicial officials were best for Bigorre. The bishop of Tarbes (also the first president of the Estates of Bigorre) wrote to Colbert¹ in rather strong language against the marquis of Antin. This dispute revolved around the status of the prévôts de justice, ambulatory officials whose tasks involved not only apprehending criminals but also judging them. These officials were so corrupt that they had been abolished by the king in Bigorre only. But Antin, who had recently married into a very influential family (the Montespons), was endeavouring to re-establish

¹The bishop of Tarbes to Colbert, 21 March, 1664. Depping, II, 133-35.

these officials. As the bishop of Tarbes pointed out, there were a great number of assassinations and murders in Bigorre, which was to be expected in such a wild and remote area, but the regular channels of justice were coping with these problems at least as well as the prévôts had done; furthermore, the regular justices did not apprehend innocent individuals for the purpose of extracting money from them in exchange for dropping the charges. The bishop called upon Pellot as witness to the truth of his statements. That he would suggest Pellot as a witness indicates the intendant's preference for the local, normal channels of justice rather than the prévôts. Since the prévôts of Bigorre were both corrupt and inefficient, and since the local justice was, at worst, inefficient, Pellot supported the form of justice which was least likely to burden unduly the people of Bigorre.

Not all prévôts fit the pattern established by those of Bigorre, but most of them throughout the kingdom probably did. Unlike the situation in Bigorre, the prévôts in the other areas of France continued in their functions. The reason is well illustrated by the following case. The prévôt of Quercy had captured some murderers who were so impecunious that the expenses of their capture and detention had to be defrayed by the prévôt. Pellot had informed Colbert of this case, which seemed to be an instance of rare industry on the part of a prévôt, and had recommended that his expenses be repaid. Colbert

replied¹ that he would speak to the king about reimbursing the prévôt and rewarding him for his zeal. The amount involved was only 500-600 livres but even such a paltry sum as this had to be approved by the king. Since this process was so slow and by no means certain of happy conclusion, it is little wonder that the prévôts were generally reluctant to catch and detain criminals who had no means of bribing their way out of prison. The prévôts, therefore, caught only individuals rich enough to buy their freedom. The prévôts continued to prey on the people, and criminals continued to go unpunished. In 1664, similar cases of the reluctance of police and justice officers to apprehend impecunious felons were reported by Pontac, the procureur général of the parlement of Bordeaux.²

As a part of the judicial machinery of seventeenth century France, the intendant was rarely a judge, often a police officer, and always the instrument of special instructions from the king and Colbert. For the latter capacity, one example is sufficient. In 1663,³ Colbert ordered Pellot to investigate the assassination attempt on the life of Miremont, who had close personal connections with Colbert. Realizing the ponderous nature of the judi-

¹Colbert to Pellot, 22 June, 1663. Clément, II, 7.

²Pontac to Colbert, 8 February, 1664. Depping, II, 133.

³Colbert to Pellot, 19 June, 1663. Ibid., 11-12.

cial procedure, Colbert requested Pellot to gather the facts in order that the case be settle quickly, before time obscured much of the truth.

As a sort of special police officer, Pellot was often instructed to restore order and bring criminals to the local justices for trial. Such was the case in 1662 when Colbert informed the intendant that two former musketeers were apparently involved in disturbances in Guyenne. The instructions which Pellot received on this occasion were worded as follows:

His Majesty desires that you remedy the situation by your authority and, in the event that the information is correct, you are to instruct the regular justices to prosecute in order that the culprits receive harsh punishment. [emphasis mine.]¹

Pellot, therefore, had the authority to quell disturbances, be they ever so minor, but he had no authority to judge the culprits, unless specifically granted such powers by the king. In this case, as in many others, the intendant served as policeman extraordinary.

However, Pellot was empowered to sit on any criminal tribunal which he chose but his voice was not always the one which carried the decision. In 1662 he reported that he and the regular justices had judged several of Ladouze's men and had condemned five to the galleys. He

¹Colbert to Pellot, 3 December, 1662. Clément, II, 237-38.

"Sa Majeste désire que vous y remédiiez par vostre autorité, et que, en cas que cet avis soit véritable, vous fassiez informer contre eux par les juges ordinaires, pour après les punir avec sévérité."

had wanted more to be sent to the galleys but the judges overruled his wishes.¹ In other correspondence, Pellot indicated that he had condemned criminals or had had them condemned to the galleys, but generally it appears that some tribunal other than himself had had to reach the final decision. What renders a definite assessment of Pellot's powers difficult is that there were occasions upon which he seems to have been the sole judge.² Therefore, it must be surmised that Pellot could assume the powers of a judge where local resistance to such action was weak or where the citizens of an area were indifferent to this sort of encroachment upon their judicial autonomy. Nor, of course, can one forget that there were many instances of Pellot's acting as a judge upon the authority of the king, the best example of which is his activity during the Audijos revolt.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 8 April, 1662. Depping, II, 874.

²Pellot to Colbert, 16 February, 1665. Ibid., 878.

CHAPTER III

MINOR ACTIVITIES OF THE INTENDANT

Public Works

In the field of public works, the intendants were not given wide general authority, but they were instructed to pay attention to the construction of roads, rivers, canals, ports and public buildings with an eye to possible improvement or development. Pellot devoted much time to the improvement of water transportation. As instructed by Colbert, he inspected the rivers in his généralités to ascertain if they could be rendered navigable at a reasonable expense. The major result of Pellot's investigations was the commencement of locks on the River Lot which will be discussed below.

The fact that Colbert instructed the intendants to investigate the condition of the roads and other public works in the généralités is an indication of the increased strength they had acquired. According to Clément¹ an ordinance of 1508 had given the trésoriers de France control over the inspection of all roads, bridges, major travel arteries, ports and streets in the kingdom. Colbert restricted their powers to the financial aspect of the bridges and

¹Clément, IV, 411, note 2.

main highways and gave all other aspects to the intendants. The latter were not zealous enough to suit Colbert; therefore, he gave an assistant to the intendants, commissaires pour les ponts et chaussées, who were to be chosen by the intendants from the trésoriers de France resident in the généralité.

Apparently Colbert was not satisfied with the activity of the trésoriers of Poitou even in their reduced capacity as financial agents in road construction. On 5 November, 1662, he wrote a general letter to the trésoriers de France in Poitiers¹ informing them that the king had made provision for the expenditure of 2,500 livres for the repair of the major roads, and that the money should be spent wisely. In order to ensure that it was, Colbert instructed the trésoriers to keep him informed of the progress on the roads. He advised them that they would do well to see that optimum use be made of the funds available because not only would the sum likely be increased in the following years, but the complete control of it would be left to the trésoriers to administer, provided that they did their duty efficiently. Apparently, the intendant of Poitou, Pellot, was experiencing difficulty coping with all of the duties which Colbert originally had assigned to him and was not carrying out proper supervision of the roads. Colbert, therefore, was willing to lighten his burden by per-

¹Colbert to the trésoriers de France of Poitou, 5 November, 1662. Clément IV, 411-12.

mitting the trésoriers to regain some of their previous powers.

In matters purely technical, Colbert trusted the experts, not the intendants. This fact is pointed out in the instructions to the Chevalier de Clerville, an engineer of great repute.¹ In these instructions, Clerville was ordered to investigate possible locations for ports and store houses between Saint-Jean-de-Luz and the river at Bordeaux.² In addition he was to visit the site of the Château-Trompette in Bordeaux, which had been destroyed during the Fronde (1651), to ascertain the extent of repairs already undertaken and the cost and time necessary for completion.

Pellot's role in the construction of the Château-Trompette in Bordeaux was a much more passive one than one would guess considering his demonstrated taste for construction of public works (for example, the quay he proposed for Bordeaux) and the fact that he spent a good part of his time in Bordeaux. In fact, he only became involved in his capacity as intendant of justice. The Bordelais linked the construction of the Château-Trompette to the establishment of the gabelle which had caused so much trouble in Béarn, Chalosse and Bayonne, particularly during the years 1664-66. In December, 1665, a man named Chapelus, aided by Macanan and Aubigean, murdered one of the carpen-

¹Colbert to Clerville, 1663. Clément, IV, 413-16.

²Colbert to Clerville, 1663. Ibid., 415.

ters on the pretext that since the carpenter was working on the Château-Trompette, he was necessarily a gabelleur.¹ The lieutenant criminel did not acquit himself very well in this matter according to Dejardins:

. . . murder, theft and assassination go on there without hindrance; no one is safe.²

Chapelus, he stated, was twice saved by a councillor of the parlement of Bordeaux, M. Borde, but finally was killed while attacking the château for a third time.³

A similar case a year earlier indicated the speed of justice in Bordeaux. A man named Caseau had murdered Dulac, one of the stone suppliers for the Château-Trompette. On 31 October, Pellot acknowledged the arrêt Colbert had sent him with the authorization for the capture of Caseau (sometimes Cazeau).⁴ Over a year later, Desjardins informed Colbert⁵ that Caseau was still at large because of the laxity on the part of the police, in spite of the arrêt which Pellot had sent them. Since Pellot was

¹Desjardins to Colbert, 11 December, 1665. Depping, IV, 33-34.

²Desjardins to Colbert, 11 December, 1665. Ibid. ". . . on y tue, on y volle, on assassine sans remédie: personne n'y est en sureté."

³Description of the members of the parlement of Bordeaux, 1663. Ibid., II, 128.

"Borde, Henri de: doien de la premier des enquestes, homme de courage, habile, ayant beaucoup d'amis dans la compagnie; capable de bien servir le roy."

⁴Pellot to Colbert, 31 October, 1664. Ibid., III, 76.

⁵Desjardins to Colbert, 11 December, 1665. Ibid., IV, 34.

unable to force or encourage the Bordelais to capture Caseau, one assumes that the officials sympathized with Caseau's cause, namely opposition to the construction of the Château-Trompette. Despite repeated assurances of the king to the contrary, the people of Bordeaux believed that its completion would bring with it the hated gabelle. The general resistance of the Bordelais to the extension of central authority is clearly evident in the opposition to the completion of the château. The Château-Trompette was still unfinished in August, 1670,¹ and was finished or at least in operation only by March, 1675.²

Pellot apparently was more involved with one of the pilot projects in the construction of barracks for the French troops. He reported on the progress in the construction of barracks in Lourde, Dax, and Bayonne; as with most other things in Guyenne, the progress was very slow due to the costs.³

The most important public work with which Pellot was connected was the task of rendering the Lot River navigable from Villeneuve sur Lot (then Villeneuve d'Agen), a distance of approximately fifty miles. This would not only open trade from the interior in coal, but also in

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, August, 1670. Depping, IV, 64.

²Colbert to Sève, 17 April, 1675. Ibid., III, 253, note 1.

³Pellot to Colbert, 22 April, 1666. Ibid., IV, 9.

wheat, wine and fruit from Rouergue. On 3 December, 1662, Pellot was given advance notice of the general instruction which all intendants would receive in late 1663 concerning, among other matters, the orders to examine the potential of rivers in the généralité which could be made navigable.¹

Pellot's correspondance with Colbert on the subject of the project for the Lot is available from 5 May, 1664 only.² Pellot agreed with Colbert about the advisability of the project and suggested that the expense be borne by the inhabitants of the areas which the new trade artery would serve. In addition, he proposed to levy the corvée in order to obtain labourers.³ Pellot estimated the time for construction (roughly two years) and the cost, and informed Colbert that by having the central government undertake the construction of the locks, Colbert would save fifty per cent of the cost which would have been demanded by a private company. In addition, the private company would want to charge a fee for the use of each lock, thereby defeating the purpose of the locks, which was to facilitate transport of goods from the interior to the coast.

Despite the presence and advice of several leading engineers -- Clerville, de Bourgneuf, Desjardins, and Jansse -- Pellot was forced to report that most of the work

¹Colbert to Pellot, 3 December, 1662. Clément, II, 236.

²Pellot to Colbert, 5 May, 1664. Depping, IV, 4.

³Pellot to Colbert, 29 May, 1665. Ibid., 5.

which had been done in 1664 had been destroyed by the winter.¹ This was to be a familiar refrain in Pellot's letters for the succeeding months. The problem was that the engineers could not detect faulty construction until the river had demonstrated the errors.

Pellot stayed at the site of construction for a good part of 1665 and reported constantly on the progress to Colbert, but the news was rarely good. On 22 April, 1666,² he reported that the river was so tricky that it was still causing the engineers a great deal of trouble, which meant that the work was far behind even the revised schedules. Finally, however, he was able to inform Colbert³ that the river was navigable from Lustrac to Villeneuve, a distance of roughly ten miles or one-fifth of the total distance required. The documents do not reveal the completion date of the whole project, but there is a letter from Colbert to Feuille, an engineer, dated 28 December, 1669, pressing him to encourage those interested or those who would most profit from the project to contribute money in order that the work be completed.⁴ The project which Pellot estimated would take two years was, therefore, extended by at least three years.

¹Pellot to Colbert, 29 May, 1665. Depping, IV, 7.

²Pellot to Colbert, 22 April, 1666. Ibid., 9.

³Pellot to Colbert, 9 August, 1666. Ibid.

⁴Colbert to de la Feuille, 28 December, 1669. Clément, IV, 439.

A by-product of the development of the Lot River locks was the enthusiasm for mineral prospecting. Pellot encouraged Colbert to believe that a significant coal deposit could be taken from the mountains around Cransac (near Decazeville).¹ Pellot sent a man to examine the mines in the area and to have an assay report made. The report being favourable, Pellot calculated the reduction in cost of coal which would occur if the mines proved as good as the report indicated. Encouraged by the potential new development of the coal industry in Rouergue, Colbert ordered Pellot to ascertain the state of several lead mines which were supposed to be along the Lot River. Pellot did as he was instructed and discovered that there were several such mines which had been abandoned because no one knew how to develop the area profitably, nor was anyone willing to risk the expense.² According to the reports given to Pellot, several of the mines could be worked profitably.

In the succeeding years much prospecting was carried out in the regions of Rouergue and Foix, none of it involving Pellot. It is not difficult to understand why Pellot was excluded from the exploration in his own généralité. Not only did he know nothing about mining, but he was engaged elsewhere. Most of the exploration was done in 1668 and 1669. Although there is little information avail-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 2 December, 1664. Depping, IV, 6.

²Pellot to Colbert, 14 January, 1665. Ibid., 7.

able on Pellot's movements in 1668, it is definite that he spent from 15 February to 5 July 1669 in Bordeaux attempting to coax the Bordelais to invest in the Company of the North. Prior to 15 February, Pellot travelled no further west than Montauban, spending most of his time in and around Agen.

Pellot never lost interest in the development of facilities in the municipalities of his généralités. On 15 February, 1669¹ he proposed the construction of a quay in Bordeaux which would include sewers and aqueducts. It was necessary, he said, because it could straighten out the canal, enable the currents to carry away the sand and gravel deposited by the tides, and it would prevent the refuse of the city from being dumped into the river. As usual, the major obstacle to his plan was the citizenry of Bordeaux who felt that the project would be too costly. In order to further his plans, Pellot assembled the town fathers to discuss this and other matters. Although his plan was rejected flatly, Pellot did at least convince the Bordelais to repair the pavement and to clean up the city's streets, a small victory.²

There can be little doubt that Pellot was involved in many other similar attempts to increase the amount of time and money devoted by the communities to public works,

¹Pellot to Colbert, 15 February, 1669. Depping, III, 413.

²Pellot to Colbert, 19 February, 1669. Ibid., 414.

but the documents are silent. It is, therefore, difficult to assess the success or failure of the efforts of Pellot in his attempts to improve the roads, rivers, buildings and other public works of his généralités. Only two facts can be stated without contradiction: (1) Pellot never ceased his efforts, and (2) due to his zeal the River Lot finally received the locks needed to improve travel and trade in the généralités.

Municipal Affairs

In the course of administrative duties, Pellot was often involved in strictly municipal affairs, particularly with regard to officers who did their jobs poorly or not at all, and to the election of many of the officers. As in many other cases, the intendant was simply one of the channels through which grievances were transmitted to the king and Colbert. Without specific instructions from Colbert, the intendant was powerless. In ordinary circumstances, the intendant appears to have had general powers to deal with the debts of communities, but any extraordinary measure designed to cope with this problem had to be authorized from Paris.

One of the first problems which Pellot faced on assuming the role of intendant in Montauban was the question of the election of the consuls of Montauban (municipal officers). The lieutenant general of Guyenne, François

d'Epinay, marquis of Saint-Luc, had ordered that the process of election be scrapped. In its place he wished to substitute appointment of officials by himself. The bishop of Montauban wrote to Colbert asking that Pellot be given instructions nullifying Saint-Luc's orders.¹ It is obvious that without such orders, Pellot could not intervene in this dispute.

Pellot reported to Colbert concerning other elections of consuls, usually because some powerful individual was interested in manipulating the local authorities. In the case of Pamiers, the consuls who were elected offended the bishop of Pamiers. The latter, reported Pellot,² had long been meddling in the affairs of the city by putting into positions of authority people who were of such low condition that they would obey the bishop rather than employ the dignity of their office to resist him.

In most elections there were great irregularities. A report from du Saulx, avocat général in Bordeaux, to Colbert³ indicated that the corruption in the choice of consuls was rampant and that many royal officials were being elected who were detrimental to the areas they were to serve and to the king's interest. Probably the worst case of corruption which he cited, however, was the elec-

¹Bishop of Montauban to Colbert, 9 January, 1663. Depping, I, 661.

²Pellot to Colbert, 21 April, 1664. Ibid., 706.

³du Saulx to Colbert, 11 February, 1664. Ibid., 692.

tion of consuls in Nérac and Condom. In these towns, men became consuls who had been condemned to death; for obvious reasons, they had been executed in effigy. Du Saulx then went on to say that the case was still worse than ordinary because in the same election, the procureur du roi had become a colleague of the very criminals he had been instructed to apprehend. There is no documentary evidence that Pellot intervened in the elections of most municipalities, but the little evidence which remains encourages one to believe that he attempted to correct some of the grosser abuses.

In a letter of 13 June, 1669¹ Pellot strongly urged Colbert to appoint the jurats (municipal officers) of Bordeaux. If he failed to do so, then the marquis of Saint-Luc would continue to appoint them, and continue to collect the bribes which were habitually offered to ensure nomination. Pellot was concerned because he doubted that the individuals best qualified for the task were selected.

Prior to Pellot's appointment as intendant of Bordeaux, Colbert had sent a circular to all intendants instructing them to make a survey of the number of bourgeois in their généralités and to examine their credentials. This was important because the bourgeois in many areas of France enjoyed exemptions from certain taxes. Such was the case in Bordeaux where Lejay (the intendant who pre-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 13 June, 1669. Depping, I, 712.

ceded Pellot) had supervised the examination of credentials.¹ Having discovered that many credentials were either false or could not be produced, Lejay recommended that the number of bourgeois be reduced. The marquis of Saint-Luc and the bourgeois of Bordeaux complained so actively that the king decided to order a new investigation.

Pellot became the intendant of Bordeaux and thereby inherited the task. Examining the work of Lejay, Pellot discovered that the intendant had kept no written record of his enquiry.² Finally, he recommended that rather than working through the credentials of the bourgeois, the king should first examine the potential profits to him of such a venture. According to Pellot, the same amount of trade could be carried on by a smaller number of bourgeois, but reducing the number of bourgeois would not profit the king.³ The only way the king could gain any advantage was to reduce the privileges which the bourgeois enjoyed, that is, decrease the number of items on which they paid no taxes. Estimating the increase of revenue to the king at 200,000 livres, Pellot even included in the letter⁴ a proposed arrêt which could be effected should the king decide to reduce the exemptions of the bourgeois. Once

¹Lejay to Colbert, 12 November, 1663. Depping, I, 685.

²Pellot to Colbert, 17 March, 1664. Ibid., 705.

³Pellot to Colbert, 3 March, 1664. Ibid., 692.

⁴Pellot to Colbert, 18 April, 1664. Ibid., 706.

again, the documents are silent on the outcome.

During Louis XIV's reign, much of the local autonomy of various municipalities disappeared, less by the direct design of the king than by the inability of the communities to manage their own finances. Many invalid claims were being made upon the communities, but the local authorities were either blind to corruption and dishonesty or they deliberately ignored them. In any case, the communities often had to pay excessive interest on loans; not being able even to service the debts, they gave up much of the municipal land as partial payment. Louis and Colbert intervened when the communities' poor management prevented them from paying the taille and other taxes.

As early as 1666, Pellot was involved in the verification of the debts of various communities. On 2 November, 1666¹ Pellot informed Séguier that he had examined the debts of the area of Montaigut, with beneficial results for those communities. He was able to reduce the burden on many of these communities by as much as twenty-five to fifty per cent.

Since the revenues were not properly and honestly collected and spent, Pellot proposed that the collection and expenditure of the municipal revenue be removed from the control of the municipal officers and placed under the

¹Pellot to Séguier, 2 November, 1666. O'Reilly, I, 637.

jurisdiction of the intendants.¹ Following this scheme, the revenues would be placed in the care of individuals designated by the intendants. Without such a check on the remaining money, the funds would only be dissipated as before.

Pellot also advocated another method of erasing the large debts of some cities. He wrote to Colbert seeking authorization for a scheme whereby the city of Libourne (near Bordeaux) would put a tax on certain goods, the proceeds being specifically designated to the settling of debts. Pellot wanted to begin this pilot project in Libourne because he believed the example of Libourne would encourage the Bordelais to undertake a similar experiment.²

Whether Pellot's exact proposals were carried out cannot be determined with the documents available; however, it is certain that Louis followed the advice of his intendant to the extent that, in his later reign, he absorbed much former municipal financial responsibility into his own sphere of authority.

Marine Affairs

The affairs of the navy began to preoccupy Colbert very early in his career. The need for oarsmen was pressing since each galley required at least one hundred men, not one of whom was likely to live to old age. Since the

¹Pellot to Colbert, 13 June, 1669. Depping, I, 711.

²Pellot to Colbert, 13 June, 1669. Ibid., 712.

work of rowing was both undesirable and unhealthy, the only people whom Colbert could employ to staff the galleys were slaves bought or captured from the Turks and Greeks. Heavy expenditure of capital for purchases of slaves being prohibitive, Colbert had to employ to a greater extent the method already in use in the kingdom, which involved sending to the galleys those people who were either beggars or vagabonds.¹

The practice of sending men to the galleys had become less prevalent by the time Colbert came to power. As Pellot stated, there had not been a chain through Poitou in twenty-five or thirty years.² Colbert was quick to remedy that condition, and, by 1662 he had sent out a general letter encouraging all of the judicial agencies, such as the parlements, to condemn as many of their convicts to the galleys as possible.³ Pellot presumably received his orders to encourage the recruitment of oarsmen by January, 1662, since, while serving as intendant in Poitou he encouraged the judicial officials to do their duty to the navy of France. He also suggested to Colbert⁴ that there were several possible sources of oarsmen which had not yet

¹For further treatment of this subject, see P. Bamford, "The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys, 1660-1748", in A.H.R., LXV; October, 1959, 31-48.

²Pellot to Colbert, 27 April, 1662. Depping, II, 875.

³Pontac to Colbert, 15 May, 1662. Ibid., 819.

⁴Pellot to Colbert, 4 January, 1662. Ibid., 874.

been tapped: the faux-sauniers (salt smugglers) were ideal for such activity because they were not only a scourge of the country, but they were also in perfect physical condition and, therefore, less likely to die under the heavy strain of rowing. Another source of oarsmen which Pellot suggested was the seditious population of Bordeaux since it had had the audacity to attack the troops of the king.¹

In spite of the reluctance of many judges to condemn men to the galleys, Pellot had managed to collect twenty forçats (that is, men so condemned) whom he wished to send to Toulon where all the galleys were located.² He immediately was confronted with several difficulties in regard to their transport. At first he was charged with the responsibility of finding and paying men to escort the forçats to Toulon, but no one could be found who would do the job for what Pellot considered to be a reasonable amount of money. He recommended that someone be sent with a chain from Paris through the western provinces to collect all the forçats.

The most important factor was time, Pellot pointed out.³ The progress of the chain was painfully slow and there was no guarantee that the prisoners it had been sent to collect would still be alive when it arrived, consider-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 4 January, 1662. Depping, II, 874.

²Pellot to Colbert, 8 April, 1662. Ibid.

³Pellot to Colbert, 27 April, 1662. Ibid., 876.

ing the conditions of most of the seventeenth century provincial prisons. Pellot's major problem was that he had to ensure that the prisoners were incarcerated and kept reasonably healthy. This was generally the responsibility of the municipality in which the court had convicted the criminal. Since the municipalities were forced to look after the needs of their criminals, they were reluctant to condemn anyone to permanent or lengthy periods of incarceration in their own jails because the expense to the community was not welcome. Hence, the criminals were usually banished or forced to make monetary restitution to their victims. Unless a chain arrived quickly, therefore, Pellot would be faced by an irate municipality demanding the immediate removal of the criminals. In addition, the municipality would be unlikely to condemn any more criminals to the galleys if it appeared that they would have to be supported for lengthy periods of time in the area. The best way, therefore, to ensure a large number of forçats was to empty the prisons quickly.

In an effort to find a method of ridding Poitou of its forçats quickly, Pellot suggested to Colbert that they be gathered and sent to La Rochelle where they could embark for Toulon.¹ The sea voyage would have many advantages over the traditional land routes. In the first place, at least one half of all the forçats who began the

¹Pellot to Colbert, 27 April, 1662. Depping, II, 876.

long march to Toulon were destined never to reach that city because they could be rescued or could escape. Often the chain was attacked by friends of the convicts. A letter from Thibaut, prévôt de la marine, to Colbert¹ indicates some of the problems of this nature which Pellot was eventually forced to cope with as intendant of Bordeaux. Thibaut had been sent to Bordeaux, Pau and Toulouse with a chain to gather the forçats and transport them to Toulon. Since some of the forçats were sons of the bourgeois of Bordeaux, he had to ward off several attempts to release them en route. That there were sons of the Bordelais bourgeoisie on the chain was an indication of the very bad state of affairs in Bordeaux, an ominous sign of the difficulties which Pellot would encounter in the intendency of Bordeaux.

The danger of ambush of the chain aside, many of the convicts were so weakened by their stay in jails that they were too sick to finish the journey to the galleys. The sea voyage, Pellot argued, would eliminate the problems of both sickness and escape. This very sensible suggestion was rejected by Colbert de Terron, intendant de la marine at La Rochelle, but his reasons are not to be found.² Pellot repeated his request several times, denying that there could be any reasonable objections, but it

¹Thibaut to Colbert, 15 August, 1663. Depping, II, 902.

²Pellot to Colbert, 16 May, 1662. Ibid., 876-7.

is apparent that he lost that argument because letters subsequent to 1662 contain references to the chain to Toulon. In 1664, Pellot informed Colbert that he would obey the instructions received regarding sending forçats as soon as he had a sufficient number in Bordeaux.¹ Even from this coastal city, he was forced to send his convicts by chain rather than by sea.

Where the enthusiasm of local justices seemed to be insufficient, Pellot tried to make up for it by condemning or ordering the condemnation of criminals to the galleys. On 16 February, 1665² Pellot informed Colbert that a chain would be starting soon for Toulon. It would consist of seven or eight criminals whom he had found in the prisons of the parlement, ten or twelve from Toulouse and others whom he had condemned or whom he had had condemned.

In 1662 a royal order had been published and sent to all judicial officials ordering the substitution of banishment to the galleys for the death penalty except in cases of lèse-majesté and extraordinary cases.³ This order apparently did not have the desired effect in Bordeaux, for the king was forced to command Colbert to write to the parlement there insisting on clemency for the convicted mur-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 18 February, 1664. Depping, II, 878.

²Pellot to Colbert, 16 February, 1665. Ibid.

³Pellot to Colbert, 15 May, 1662. Ibid., 891.

derers.¹ This clemency consisted of commuting the sentences of death to life on the galleys, a nice bit of hypocrisy since life on the galleys could not lead to anything but slow death. In July, 1665, Pontac, procureur général of the parlement of Bordeaux, wrote that the ordinance was taking effect and that there would be twenty forçats for the chain.² The significant feature of this letter is that Pellot, who surely would have been exhorting the parlement to condemn more criminals to the galleys had been ineffective. The parlement still refused any direction from the intendant; only a series of letters from Colbert could produce the desired effect, and even this may have been only transitory.

The last letters which are available in which Pellot refers to the galleys are dated 1665, but as Colbert did not lose his enthusiasm for forçats³ there is good reason to believe that Pellot continued to condemn criminals to the oars and that he encouraged others to do the same.

It is evident from the above pages that Pellot was much involved in the affairs of the galleys, but in many cases, his zeal went unrewarded or proved fruitless. The reasons for this are indicative of the administrative problems which Colbert and Louis experienced in their attempt

¹Pontac to Colbert, 16 February, 1665. Depping, II, 891.

²Pontac to Colbert, 31 July, 1665. Ibid., 892.

³Colbert to Bezons, 24 July, 1671. Ibid., 938.

to establish a stronger central authority. The major difficulty was that Colbert was unwilling to put in the hands of the provincial agents any powers which eventually could become a problem to the central government. This meant that the provincial intendants were not permitted to use their own initiative on even the smallest of points without first consulting with Colbert. In the case of the suggestion of Pellot that the forçats be sent to La Rochelle and transported by sea to Toulon, the intendant had developed a very sensible and efficient means of achieving the end of which Colbert himself had been desirous. Had the intendant not been hemmed in with regulations he could have simply begun to send criminals to Toulon without consulting anyone. Yet he could not, with the result that fifty per cent of the criminals condemned to the galleys continued to avoid that fate either by escape or by death as a result of the hardships of land travel and incarceration.

A more ridiculous example of the interference of Colbert at the most trivial levels of administration is one suggested in a letter to him from Pellot.¹ In it the intendant mentioned that he had sent the forçats who had been incarcerated in the prisons of Montauban because some of them were dying and others had been able to make their escape due to the carelessness of the concierge. The ten-

¹Pellot to Colbert, 18 February, 1664. Depping, II, 878.

or of the letter indicates that Pellot had had to act before receiving orders from Colbert, indicating that in normal circumstances Colbert would have determined exactly when fifteen men were to be transported to the galleys. This was a rather trivial waste of an administrator's time; nevertheless, it was typical of the activities of both Colbert and Louis XIV. If the intendants were not trusted with such minor responsibilities as part of their routine tasks, the administration was doomed to collapse; they were not, and it did.

Another difficulty which Pellot encountered was that the local justices did not share his zeal for the recruitment of oarsmen. Pellot recorded the case of the men of the marquis of la Ponze who had committed crimes for which Pellot felt the just punishment to be condemnation to the galleys, and, in fact, five of the men were so punished. Had the judgment rested solely in Pellot's hands, rather than being shared with the local officers of justice, there would have been twenty more.¹ Since it was not, the other twenty men were condemned to banishment or other lesser forms of punishment. Pellot felt that if a person were criminal enough to merit banishment, he was guilty enough to receive condemnation to the galleys. But, as he expressed it, ". . . one is not easily the master of judges".²

¹Pellot to Colbert, 8 April, 1662. Depping, II, 874.

²Pellot to Colbert, 8 April, 1662. Ibid.

The only other connection with the navy which Pellot had was in the recruitment of sailors. Colbert had ordered him to enrol one-third of the sailors along the coast of Guyenne for the service of the king, the other two-thirds being allowed to pursue their normal activities of whaling and fishing.¹ This order had been effected in Bordeaux but Bayonne proved intransigent. The lieutenant of the admiralty of Bayonne had written to Pellot informing him of this fact and asking for ordinances forcing obedience of the Bayonnais sailors. Pellot felt that such letters would be more effective were they to emanate from Paris, and, accordingly, requested Colbert to send them as soon as possible. Once again, one is given a clue as to the official capacity of the intendant of Bordeaux; he could write such an ordinance; however, there was no guarantee that it would be heeded. Nor was the intendant given the independent means to ensure the enforcement of his commands; he had always to appeal for help from Colbert.

Religion

Pellot expended relatively little energy upon religious matters. Direct orders from Colbert requested that he report in some detail upon the financial and social

¹Pellot to Colbert, 25 January, 1669. Depping, III, 412-13.

position of the church in his généralité and that he provide estimates of the political reliability of leading churchmen, both secular and regular, but these efforts appear to have gone no further than sending the reports from which Colbert was attempting to create profiles of every region.

On the other hand, the problem of the Huguenots seems to have engaged the intendant's interest more deeply; in this matter he provided not only the standard reports but also some interesting suggestions for the restoration of religious unity without prejudice to the crown's economic interests and without resort to violence. He advised weakening the cult by concentrating the government's pressure upon Calvinist ministers, and he seems to have anticipated later practice by suggesting bounties for cooperation and conversion. Locally, he attempted to weaken the Huguenots by settling Catholics among them, as in his transfer of the cour des aides to Montauban.

In sum, Pellot's work in religious matters appears to have been largely routine except for some undeveloped suggestions concerning the R.P.R.,¹ and his chief motives in such matters were probably political and economic.

In assessing the career of Pellot, it is well to bear in mind the difficulties which he had to overcome. The entire area of Guyenne was populated with men of very independent spirit. The province had rarely been in very

¹This abbreviation stands for religion prétendue réformée, applied both to the Huguenots and to their religion.

close contact with the king and his officials and had generally enjoyed more local privileges than any other region in the country. Collecting taxes was difficult in the extreme as the following quotation demonstrates:

The province of Guyenne is the most difficult of all to govern because of the great extent of its lands, the great number of different fermes [areas of taxation which compose it,] and because of the disposition of the inhabitants.¹

Pellot definitely made it easier for the king to collect the revenue; his presence in the généralité enabled him to check on the cours des aides to see that decisions concerning taxes did not redound to the disadvantage of the king. Individuals had greater difficulty in avoiding the taille because Pellot often examined their patents of exemption to see that they were genuine.

As intendant of justice, Pellot functioned under great handicaps; the multiplicity of venal offices in this area of administration rendered futile attempts to rectify injustices in the system, although he did try. His powers were limited, but he still had a great deal of personal influence and prestige which compensated for the official lack of power. He could sit on tribunals and make his voice heard, but no one was forced to heed his advice;

¹Colbert to Biband, a fermier of the king, June, 1675. Depping, III, 272.

"Le département de Guienne est celui de tous dont la régie est la plus difficile, et par son estendue et par le grand nombre de fermes différentes qui le composent, et par l'humeur des peuples avec lesquels on est obligé de vivre."

nevertheless, his opinion prevailed on more than one occasion, particularly in rural areas where the councils stood in awe of this great personage representing the king. Of course, the king also gave the intendant extraordinary powers to cope with unique, or at least, very rare cases. In general, however, the powers of the intendant in the sphere of justice were severely circumscribed by tradition, strong sovereign courts, and vested interests.

The same is true for the authority which Pellot had in the areas of religion, police, municipal affairs, public works (with the important exception of river navigability), and commerce (with the equally important exception of financing trading companies). In all of these areas the intendant's efforts were significant, but in most of them he was unable to acquire any extensive permanent authority.

The intendant was encroaching on the functions of several of the older administrative officers, but the process was slow, being dependent upon the character of the man and the decisions of the king and Colbert. Had the sole criterion for increased powers of intendants rested on the individual determination and perseverance of the intendant, Pellot would have been the strongest man in Guyenne. But the king would not take the chance of alienating his subjects when he needed a submissive realm capable of paying the exorbitant taxes he demanded in his search for gloire.

SECTION II

LANGUEDOC DURING THE INTENDANCIES OF BEZONS AND DAGUESSEAU

CHAPTER IV

BEZONS AND THE PROVINCIAL ESTATES

Claude Bazin, sieur de Bezons, who was born in 1617, served as intendant of Languedoc from 1653 to 1673. At the age of twenty-two, he obtained the position of avocat général in the grand conseil.¹ Having become noted for his literary abilities, Bezons was named to the Aca-
démie française in 1643, and, ten years later, began his twenty year service as intendant of Languedoc.²

Although Bezons performed the duties of intendant of finance, justice and police for a total of twenty years, this thesis is concerned only with the period during which the tenure of Bezons and that of Colbert coincided, that is, 1661-1673.

Languedoc was a pays d'états which meant that the Estates of the province claimed the authority to prevent all expenditures requested by the king until ratified in the Estates. Therefore, in an era of weakened royal au-

¹The grand conseil was competent in matters for which the parlement of Paris could not maintain the necessary impartiality. See Marcel Marion, Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Paris: Auguste Picard, 1923, 265. (Hereafter cited Marion.)

²M. Hoefer, ed., Nouvelle biographie générale. Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1866, V, 902.

thority, the province could become almost autonomous which is, in fact, what had happened during the early seventeenth century. Henry IV had been powerless to curb the strength of the assembly, and Louis XIII had only begun the task at the end of his reign. The Fronde restored to the Estates any authority lost during the era of Richelieu and Louis XIII, rendering the task of Colbert and Louis XIV very difficult. However, Louis XIV and Colbert were determined to attempt the reduction of the Estates and all other forces in the realm in order to create a powerful monarch.

The creation of a monolith required large sums of money and it is in this regard that the intendancies of Pellot and Bezons varied so greatly. Most of Pellot's energies were devoted to facilitating the accumulation of taxes but in that task he was rarely aided by anyone whose zeal and authority were very useful. Nor did Colbert give him the amount of support necessary to wage his war against vested interests successfully. By contrast, Bezons received valuable assistance from several notable figures in Languedoc, among them the Prince of Conti (governor of Languedoc), the Archbishop of Toulouse,¹ and the marquis of Castres (the lieutenant general of Languedoc). In addition, Colbert and the king took a very great interest in the affairs of the provincial Estates because this assembly had to vote the don gratuit, a tax which was voluntary only in

¹The Archbishop of Toulouse was president of the Estates from 1664 through the intendency of Daguesseau.

the sense that the amount could be a compromise between the king's demands and the minimum which the Estates wished to give. The don was a vital element of the revenues of the king; therefore, he and Colbert devoted much time to it. In a pays d'élections, such as Guyenne, the amount of the taille was determined in Paris and was not open to any sort of debate; therefore, the efforts of Pellot with regard to finance were usually of lesser immediate importance to the treasury. The taille would be collected in Guyenne, but Pellot's task was to see that it was done with a minimum of corruption and turmoil. The tax collection system of France, therefore, determined the differences in the natures of the intendants of Languedoc and Guyenne.

The Estates were made up of three groups, the clergy (First Estate), the nobility (Second Estate), and the representatives of the municipalities (Third Estate, usually referred to in documents as the parterre because they were denied access to the elevated benches on which the other two Estates sat). As a rule, the clergy and the municipal representatives (consuls) presented the greatest number of obstacles to the smooth running of the assembly, but, on rare occasions, the nobles interfered when their particular interests were threatened. Early in the session, the king's demands for a don gratuit were presented to the gathering by the governor of the province and its provisions further elucidated by the intendant. Upon completion of the demands, the intendant and the other commissaires

(representatives of the king)¹ were escorted out of the chambers and denied re-entry until the Estates had conducted their voting, a process which often took weeks.

Although the commissaires dared not enter the assembly, they were kept abreast of the deliberations by several individuals who wished to recommend themselves to the king by their zeal. The most important of these sources was always the president of the Estates, usually the Archbishop of Toulouse. Once informed of the disagreements within the Estates and of the names of those who were unwilling to satisfy the king, the intendant was to persuade the recalcitrants to change their vote. Bribery was the most common and most effective means of accomplishing this.

As the years progressed, Bezons found that the Estates became more docile; often the money made available for purposes of bribing the members of the Estates went unspent. The documentary entries concerning the Estates become very sparse towards the end of Bezon's intendancy, and dwindle to nothing after 1673 when he was succeeded by Daguesseau.

The role played by Bezons in the decisions reached by the Estates is difficult to isolate because several other important individuals made major contributions to the success of the king's affairs. Yet, in order to say

¹These were the governor of Languedoc, a lieutenant general, three lieutenants of the king, two trésoriers de France from Toulouse, one from Montpellier and, most important, the intendant.

something meaningful about his career, this section will attempt to outline the issues and to trace Bezon's role in them from the early 1660's. Basically the issues can be summed up in three categories: (1) the increase in the amounts extracted from the Estates, (2) the ever-diminishing power of the Estates, and (3) other issues, many of them petty, which impeded the fruitful deliberations desired by the king and Bezons.

After two months of preparations on the part of the commissaires, the Estates of Languedoc were called into session on 2 January, 1662. In order to ensure that the assembly was properly controlled, Bezons invoked Colbert's support; the latter insisted that the ailing Archbishop of Toulouse attend the entire session.¹ The Archbishop was the president of the Estates in the absence of the Archbishop of Narbonne whom the king had exiled in 1661 because he was related to Fouquet, the unpopular predecessor of Colbert. As it developed, the Archbishop of Toulouse did not attend, but in his place the Bishop of Viviers was chosen president, so Bezons' wish to have a full-time president was fulfilled.

In a letter to Colbert, Bezons indicated the nature of his own duties at the beginning of each session.² He stated that as soon as possible after the commencement of

¹Bezons to Colbert, 7 November, 1661. Depping, I, 49.

²Bezons to Colbert, 21 November, 1661. Ibid., 50.

the session he would have the list of proxies representing regular members of the Estates.¹ He would then poll them in order to ascertain beforehand the probable direction of debate. Knowing the opponents of the don gratuit, the intendant could apply whatever pressures were necessary to obtain passage of the don in undiminished form. In the future, Bezons suggested, Colbert could take special note of those who served the king well during the sessions of the Estates and make sure that they were rewarded for dutiful service. This would be particularly effective in the First and Second Estates.

The parterre presented a problem of more serious aspect; it was always inclined to reduce the size of the don, and, having an equal voice with the other two groups, often could obstruct the vote. Delay was a particularly undesirable contingency to the king who always needed money in a hurry; on the other hand, the Third Estate benefited from a long session for two reasons. First, the communities which the consuls represented paid them a large daily stipend so the longer the session, the larger

¹Of the twenty-three prelates and twenty-one nobles who had the right to attend the sessions, it was rare to see more than half actually in attendance, usually the number was closer to one-quarter; however, these individuals had the right to delegate representatives to sit in their places and to vote for them. This practice created arguments in the Estates because the proxies were supposed to have noble blood for four generations on both sides of their families, a condition rarely met. The rule was seldom enforced, and many people opposed this laxity.

the stipend; and second, during the session the Third Estate was awarded montres which were grants to defray the expenses of attending the gathering. The montres were more than sufficient so the deputies derived profit from them as the session continued. A further grant, a montre de grâce, was often awarded at the end of the session, usually in fulfillment of a bribe offered during the session in order to obtain a favourable vote.

As a remedy for the dilatory behavior of the Third Estate, Bezons suggested that the Prince of Conti, governor of Languedoc, use his considerable prestige and power with the consuls. Since a majority of the consuls was chosen by the grace of Conti, Bezons stated that many would succumb to such pressures.¹ However, Bezons did not put all his trust in the efficacy of one solution, as is demonstrated by the fact that he enlisted the support of the Bishop of Viviers (the president of the assembly) and Albi, the most factious prelate in the Estates.² In addition, he asked that Colbert quickly authorize expenditures for bribing the opposition. Colbert agreed but, as will be seen below, the session went far from smoothly despite the bribery.

Bezons did not anticipate an easy session but neither did he believe that any extraordinary steps would be

¹Bezons to Colbert, 21 November, 1661. Depping, I, 50.

²Bezons to Colbert, 1 January, 1662. Ibid., 51.

necessary in order to predispose the assembly to the size of the don requested by the king; therefore, he recommended that the demands of the king be presented on the morrow of the commencement. However, the Bishop of Saint-Papoul, one of the more influential sitting members of the Estates, recommended¹ that the presentation of the don be deferred for a week or ten days to give the commissaires time to manipulate the reluctant voters.² His wish was granted.³

No other stone was left unturned in order to facilitate the success of the don. The committee examining the credentials of the proxies at the Estates⁴ reported that most were unqualified to sit but recommended that no action be taken against them because all appeared to be loyal. Bezons and Conti seconded this recommendation with one exception. They proposed to disqualify the consul of Agde, whose credentials were as good as the others, because he was a well known dissident and a factious element in the assembly. The Bishop of Saint-Papoul, head of the creden-

¹Bishop of Saint-Papoul to Colbert, 2 January, 1662. Depping, I, 51.

²The historian is fortunate that Colbert was so concerned with the progress of the deliberations of the Estates. He asked all bishops to send him separate reports on each session, many of which have survived.

³The most interesting feature of this suggestion was that the Bishop of Saint-Papoul feared to present it to the intendant. That a bishop dared not make to an intendant a recommendation which he believed would be received unfavourably is a significant indication of the stature of the intendant.

⁴See p. 140, note.

tials committee, also recommended that pressure be exerted on the delegates from the four or five principal cities to speak in favour of the don as requested in order to induce the lesser cities to follow this lead.¹ Saint-Papoul clearly intended this suggestion for Bezons, but, fearing to present it directly to the intendant, approached Colbert who relayed the suggestion.

In spite of the universal astonishment in the Estates at the size of the king's demand,² the assembly voted 1,200,000 livres on the first ballot; however, this sum was not considered final even by the members of the Estates. It was the first offer, which the king usually rejected as insufficient. Occasionally the king agreed to accept only a moderate increase on the advice of his commissaires concerning the financial condition of the province. In this case, both Conti and Bezons informed Colbert of the poverty in Languedoc due to the havoc wrought on all crops by the weather. Augmenting the don to 1,500,000 livres as the king wished would, therefore, cause great hardship in the province, they asserted, but, if necessary, the sum could be obtained.³

No one else shared even this limited optimism about

¹Bishop of Saint-Papoul to Colbert, 6 January, 1662. Depping, I, 58.

²Bishop of Saint-Papoul to Colbert, 13 January, 1662. Ibid., 59.

³Conti and Bezons to Colbert, 20 January, 1662. Ibid., 69.

the likelihood of receiving a favourable vote to increase the don. The Bishops of Castres and Saint-Papoul and the marquis of Castres, lieutenant general of Languedoc (d. 1674), all doubted that the Estates would go higher than 1,200,000 livres.¹ Bezons continued his coercion, directing his attention to the Bishop of Montpellier, known to be opposed to augmenting the don. He must have had some effect because the king was granted his 1,500,000 livres on 1 February.²

A letter from Penautier,³ treasurer of the Estates of Languedoc, provides a very interesting post script to the session of 1662. Penautier reminded Colbert that he had provided out of his own pocket the money used by Bezons to bribe certain members of the Estates; for this expenditure, totalling 9,000 livres, Penautier wished to be reimbursed. According to him, the names of the recipients of the bribes, and even the existence of such bribes were closely guarded secrets, which is a tribute to the intendant's judgment. Had the bribes become common knowledge, all those who had loyally voted the sums demanded by the king would complain that they, too, ought to receive some gratification for their zeal. One is reminded of the case of the Prodigal Son being awarded benefits which the faith-

¹Bishops of Saint-Papoul and Castres and the marquis of Castres to Colbert, 20 January, 1662. Depping, I, 68-72.

²Bishop of Mende to Colbert, 1 February, 1662.
Ibid., 75.

³Penautier to Colbert, 28 March, 1662. Clément, VII, 445.

ful one never dreamed of requesting.

The independent and factious attitudes of the members of the Estates of 1662 had provided a severe test of the abilities of Bezons and the other commissaires; nevertheless, they had procured the sum demanded by the king. This was not the case in 1663. The king's proposals were so exorbitant that the Estates would not even approach the requested amount.

In 1662 the English had ceded Dunkerque to the French for a total cost of 5,000,000 livres. Since the treasury did not have the money, the king's subjects were forced to contribute amounts well beyond the ordinary taille. Colbert was certain that everyone would wish to contribute since the acquisition of Dunkerque would benefit the state and religion.¹ The reason that the coffers were empty, Colbert confessed to Conti,² was that, in order to put on a truly impressive demonstration of the splendor of the monarchy of Louis XIV, he had diverted all of the money destined to the payment of the troops for December, January and February. As a result, the king had to demand a don gratuit of 2,000,000 livres of which 500,000 was to be in cash, payable immediately. One week later, the king raised his demands by 500,000 livres.³

¹Colbert to Bezons, 24 November, 1662. Depping, I, 87-9.

²Colbert to Conti, 1 December, 1662. Clément, IV, 7.

³Bazons to Colbert, 8 December, 1662. Depping, I, 94.

The enormity of this request resulted in attempts on the part of many individuals in the Estates, including most of the parterre, to delay debate on the don as long as possible in hopes of a change in the king's attitude. This provoked Bezons and Conti to recommend that the Third Estate be granted only four montres regardless of the length of the session. The issue employed to delay the vote concerned the don granted in 1662. The Estates had voted much more than the province had been able to afford; therefore, they had had to borrow, rendering necessary the imposition of a tax to repay the money. The imposition of this tax, payable to the Estates, created the problem of scrutinizing the collection. Normally this was the province of the bureau des comptes, but the parterre maintained that there was no precedent for the particular tax and, therefore, the collection ought to be conducted by the Estates in session. This would delay the sitting for at least six months, benefitting only the Third Estate. The commissaires finally forced the Estates to accept a commission to examine the special tax receipts, paving the way for consideration of the don.¹

The fact that the don gratuit voted in 1662 had been so high that the province had had to borrow to pay it militated against the efforts of Bezons to obtain the abnormally high demands of 1663. In addition, the poverty

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 8 December, 1662. Depping, I, 95-7.

of the province had been described more than once by every member of the corps of commissaires, including Bezons. Apparently these reports had some effect because Colbert finally authorized Bezons to accept a don of only 1,600,000 livres (3 February, 1663), of which 200,000 livres were specifically ear-marked for the acquisition of Dunkerque. In the minds of the members of the Estates, it was important to isolate from the amount of the don those sums which were destined for extraordinary expenses such as the grant for Dunkerque. By so doing, they could prevent setting precedents for an annual don gratuit of 1,600,000 livres, as might happen if they approved an undifferentiated grant.

Bezons' report on the session reflected the discontent and poverty in the province. Several delegates had opposed the increase in the don (from the first offer of 1,200,000 livres), others had approved it with the recommendation that the king be requested to withdraw some of the garrisons located in the province which were proving a great burden on the resources of the territory. The intendant also stated that the Estates had voted much more than they could possibly pay, which meant that a considerable amount would have to be borrowed or obtained from special taxes. This would be the second consecutive year in which the province was forced to borrow to meet the king's demands.¹

¹Bezons to Colbert, 23 December, 1662. Depping, I, 110.

Although the official meetings of the Estates ended on 3 February, there remained several issues which had to be settled before the members dispersed. The Archbishop of Toulouse had hinted to the parterre that he might be willing to authorize an extra montre if the voting proceeded rapidly; however, he did not intend to adhere to the promise. The Third Estate meant to see that he did. Furthermore, the Estates wanted action on two other issues: the droit de foraine, an export tax on produce and livestock, ought to be removed and the canal du Languedoc from Bordeaux to Narbonne ought not be constructed. On the latter two issues the king would not yield so that the only possible area for compromise was the extra montre. Bezons, the most out-spoken antagonist of these gratuities, opposed compromise but he suggested that the montre be granted, if necessary, in order to reduce Third Estate opposition to the continued collection of the droit de foraine and to the construction of the canal.¹

In a post script in his own hand (the rest of this letter had been written by a secretary), Bezons mentioned that he had often resorted to bribery in order to render the affairs of the king prosperous. He enclosed a list of the recipients, the sums and the reasons for each expenditure; the session had been long and difficult which meant that the expenditures were high. Unfortunately the list

¹Bezons to Colbert, 5 February, 1663. Depping, I, 122-3.

and the explanation of the bribes are no longer extant.

The session was over and the king had received a larger don than any granted previously.¹ From Bezons' point of view this session had been much tougher than that of 1662; he had had to settle for a don gratuit 900,000 livres lower than the king wished and he had had to accept defeat on the issue of the extra montre. On the other hand, he had displayed the power of the king's agent, and his strength did much to dissuade opposition in succeeding years. It would require a few more years to accustom the Estates to the rigid régime of Colbert and his intendants, but they had already been given a fairly representative sample of the treatment to be expected in the future. The wise bowed before the new powers, the rash blustered, and the king continued to drain the province of all its wealth.

The display of power given by the royal officials in the lengthy session of 1663 stood them in good stead during the Estates of 1664. The don (1,400,000 livres) was voted without dissent except for a small cabal which formed to protest the cost of supporting the royal garri- sons in Languedoc. This cabal was rapidly dispersed by Bezons and Conti,² leaving only the conditions to be dis-

¹The assembly may have felt that the 200,000 livres for the acquisition of Dunkerque were not included in the actual don, but the king did not agree.

²Bezons to Colbert, 31 December, 1663. Depping, I, 136.

cussed.¹ Since the latter part of the Fronde, when the monarchy was at its weakest, the Estates of Languedoc had been accustomed to attaching conditions to its don gratuit, generally relevant to the method of payment but often concerning affairs in which the Estates had no real authority.² This assumed right of remonstrance annoyed the king but he had borne with it because he had not been strong enough to eliminate it. As his strength increased, however, he paid less attention to the demands of the Estates -- as in 1664.

The Estates had attached to the don a provision stipulating that they need not deliver the money to Paris. On the other hand, the king had accepted the sum on the express condition that it be delivered by the Estates to Paris. Transporting large sums of money through provincial France was a hazardous, therefore expensive, undertaking, one which the king and the Estates were equally reluctant to assume. Bazons exerted all his persuasive and coercive powers to convince the assembly that its resistance to the will of the king could only provoke his anger since the king would not listen to opposition to delivery by the Estates. Having made their point, the

¹The session had been so easy to manipulate that Bezons had not needed the money made available by Colbert for purposes of bribery. (Bezons to Colbert, 1 February, 1664. Depping, I, 142.)

²Among the conditions of the previous session were the protest against the droit de foraine and the construction of the canal joining the two seas.

Estates were forced to yield.¹

The voting of the don in 1665 (1,400,000 livres) was just as uncomplicated as it had been in 1664, in fact, it was a little easier because Bezons finally had acquired the authority to deny the Estates the right to impose any conditions whatsoever. In the previous year, he had allowed the Estates to impose conditions which the king refused; in 1665 he allowed none.² The power of the intendant, which depended on that of the king, had reached unprecedented heights.

Bezons' influence had been even greater in 1665 due to the absence of the Prince of Conti who had attended court throughout the session, leaving the intendant almost total control over the policy to be utilized in manipulating the Estates. Bezons enjoyed no such advantage in 1666. The ailing Conti (he died before the session ended) had doggedly insisted that the king's demands for the don should be presented simultaneously with those for financing the canal joining the two seas and the restoration of the port of Sète.³ In the past, the commissaires had feared to present the king's other demands until the don had been voted. This practice was designed to prevent the Estates from balking at the size of the don due to foreknowledge

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 1 February, 1664. Depping, I, 143.

²Bezons to Colbert, 24 February, 1665. Ibid., 195.

³Bezons to Colbert, 23 November, 1665. Ibid., 199.

of other extensive demands to be presented by the commis-saires upon completion of the debate on the don. Conti believed that the assembly had so little power left that it could not oppose the don under any circumstances. Furthermore, by presenting the three issues at once, Conti felt that he would be demonstrating the importance which the king attached to these matters.

By early December, the Estates had voted 1,200,000 livres as its first offer but this was unacceptable. Although the commissaires did not know how much the king really wanted, they had no hesitation in rejecting the first offer. Obtaining this sum was the only matter in which the Estates did not prove difficult to manage during the session of 1666. Bazons reported that his fears about treating the don and the other matters in one group rather than breaking them up were proving valid. He asked Colbert to instruct Conti to divide these matters so that specific amounts would be voted for each issue. The simultaneous introduction of various matters, he continued, had prompted the assembly to attempt something never done before: the members began a discussion of the conditions of the grant of the don before they had even voted the money.¹ This enraged Bezons who made his feelings known to the Estates, with the effect that all discussion of

¹Bezons to Colbert, 14 December, 1665. Depping, I, 204.

conditions evaporated.¹

The Estates, however, did not intend to be brow-beaten into subjection. By 15 February, 1666, the commis-saires had succeeded in pushing the don to 1,700,000 livres but the Estates would not vote even that sum unless they received assurances that no more would be demanded, which assurances Bezons could not give.² Colbert had already instructed Bezons to accept no less than 2,000,000 livres of which 600,000 livres would be spent in the province on public works. Failing two million livres, Colbert would accept 1,800,000 livres of which only 200,000 would be spent in the province.³

Bezons wrote a secret letter outlining the reasons for the intransigence of the Estates. The parterre was being encouraged in its resistance by the Bishop of Saint-Pons⁴ and by those over whom Conti was supposed to have absolute control. This led Bezons to accuse Conti of attempting to sabotage the king.⁵ The only alternative explanation, he suggested, was that Conti and he had received

¹Bezons to Colbert, 18 December, 1665. Depping, I, 204-5.

²Commissaires to Colbert, 15 February, 1666. Ibid., 213.

³Colbert to Bezons, 25 January, 1666. Ibid., 209-10.

⁴Saint-Pons, a regular member of the assembly, was exiled from the Estates in 1669 for his continued opposition to the approval of the king's demands. (Bezons to Colbert, 8 February, 1669. Ibid., 238.)

⁵Bezons to Colbert, 15 February, 1666. Ibid., 214.

different instructions. This is probably the most acrimonious letter ever written by the intendant to the contrôleur général; Bezons believed that either he was not receiving the support to which he was entitled or that he was being undermined deliberately.

However, by 20 February, Bezons had changed his opinion upon receiving proof of the exact extent of the illness of Conti, by that time so sick that he was unaware of his surroundings.¹ Despite Conti's illness and the bad behavior of his men, the Estates finally voted 1,740,000 livres, of which 240,000 was earmarked for public works in the province. With the vote, the session concluded its business and was formally closed on 23 February, one day after the death of the Prince of Conti.²

A cursory examination of the facts would lead one to believe that the Estates had regained in 1666 some of the power lost to the central administration over the previous four years. Instead of the two million livres initially demanded by Colbert and the king; the Estates had voted only 1,740,000 livres, part of which could not be considered as don funds, at least, that is how the members of the Estates rationalized the money destined for public works in the province. The fact remains, however, that the king obtained ratification for a greater sum than had ever

¹Bezons to Colbert, 20 February, 1666. Depping, I, 215.

²Bezons to Colbert, 22 February, 1666. Ibid., 218.

been voted previously. The session had been difficult for the intendant, but he had also obtained more from the Estates. Therefore, although the Estates achieved the minor victory of denying the king the full amount requested, they still were forced to capitulate at a level much higher than they had wished. The session of 1666 did not put an end to the resistance of the members of the Estates; it did, nevertheless, mark the end of successful opposition to the king's demands.

The session of 1667 was so easily manipulated, due largely to the defeats of the previous years, that the don of either 1,400,000 or 1,500,000 livres¹ was dwarfed by the amount voted for the construction of the canal linking the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. After a brief struggle, the Estates voted 2,400,000 livres for the canal.² The enormity of this sum rendered the Estates passive in the following year when they were forced to vote 1,700,000 livres.³

After two successive rubber-stamp Estates, the intendant encountered some resistance during the session of 1669. Once again, the resistance was brought about by in-

¹The documents are not clear on this figure. The Estates had offered 1,400,000 livres but Bezons was instructed to accept no less than 1,500,000 livres. (Bezons to Colbert, 4 February, 1667. Depping, I, 227.)

²Verneuil, Castres and Bezons to Colbert, 1 March, 1669. Ibid., 239.

³Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 14 January, 1668. Ibid., 234-37.

creased demands on the part of the king. The assembly was presented with three demands: the don, payment of the 2,400,000 livres voted for the canal in the session of 1667, and purchase of the revocation of special financial edicts issued to help finance the canal. (The edicts provided for the creation of new offices and taxes in Languedoc.)

Bezons postponed the vote on the don until the Estates had agreed to borrow 700,000 livres as partial payment of the money previously voted for the canal.¹ Once this issue was resolved, Bezons presented the king's demands for the don, on which the Estates achieved some compromise. (The king settled for 1,400,000 livres after asking 1,800,000.) The Estates found themselves outmanoeuvred, however. Believing that they had gained a small victory in decreasing the don, they were shaken when Bezons announced that the king did not intend to revoke the edicts which he had put into effect in order to finance the canal, not believing that the Estates would provide sufficient funds for the project. The entire matter was a blatant case of blackmail, and the Estates knew it. They immediately offered to purchase the withdrawal of the edicts for 200,000 livres.

But the king could afford to procrastinate, knowing full well that the Estates would have to surrender on this point. If they failed to grant him sufficient funds

¹Verneuil, the marquis of Castres and Bezons to Colbert, 1 March, 1669. Depping, I, 239.

the edicts would go into effect. Finally, the assembly offered 600,000 livres spread over three years for the edicts, but the king refused, leaving the price to be determined in the next session.¹

In all, the Estates of 1669 had not proved to be much of a test of Bezons' abilities. By 1669, the Estates were aware of the fact that the don would have to be quite large; therefore, they only had to determine the minimum the king would accept and then vote it. The edicts, too, had proved a useful club to wield over recalcitrant heads.

The session of 1671 saw the club begin to descend.² Bezons was instructed to use his own judgment about the order of presentation of the king's demands, that is, whether to present the issue of the don or the edicts first, but he was to allow no discussion on the don; the king wished 1,400,000 livres, not more, not less.³

Bezons decided to treat the matter of the edicts first. As a method of convincing the Estates of the value of the canal du Languedoc, the intendant decided to encourage several members of the first two Estates to join him on a trip to Sète, one of the proposed outlets of the

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 8 April, 1669. Depping, I, 242.

²The documents are silent on the events of 1670 except to tell us that the Estates paid a don of 1,400,000 livres. (Verneuil, Roure and Bezons to Colbert, 9 December, 1670. Ibid., 256.)

³Colbert to Bezons, 26 November, 1670. Ibid., 253-54.

canal. Apparently he converted some of the barons and bishops because resistance to the project diminished somewhat. After the trip, the Estates were willing to purchase the edicts for 1,200,000 livres.¹

Colbert was greatly pleased that the Estates were finally beginning to comprehend the king's design regarding public works,² but he angered quickly upon learning that they were attempting to procrastinate. He instructed Bezons to warn the assembly that if 2,400,000 livres were not forthcoming, payable in equal installments for the succeeding six to eight years, the edicts would go into effect enabling the king to collect in three years what the Estates were being given six to eight years to produce. This sum is exactly twice the highest figure offered by the Estates, but Colbert was adamant about receiving it. If the assembly failed to vote the money immediately, Bezons was to proceed with the vote on the don and the edicts would go into effect.³

The threats produced the desired effects; in February, 1671, Colbert congratulated Bezons on his achievements during the session, and they were considerable. The Estates had voted in one sitting to grant 2,000,000 livres in five years for the canal and had voted

¹Bishop of Saint-Papoul to Colbert, 31 December, 1670. Depping, I, 259.

²Colbert to Bezons, 2 January, 1671. Ibid., 264.

³Colbert to Bezons, 9 January, 1671. Ibid.

a don of 1,400,000 livres.¹ Although it was still necessary to manipulate and coerce the Estates, the outcome was certain so long as the king had a capable intendant at the Estates.

No coercion was required during the session of 1672. The Estates voted 1,700,000 livres on the very day the demand was presented.² This had never happened before, but the defeats of the previous years had sapped the will to resist of the members of the Estates of Languedoc.

The preparatory talks among the commissaires about the strategy to be followed during the session of 1673 indicate the difficulty which all of them experienced with regard to obeying Colbert's orders. They had received notice that the king wished a don of 2,000,000 livres which, one would think, was straightforward enough. However, the problem of the commissaires was to ascertain whether that sum constituted the absolute minimum the king would accept, or whether it was open to negotiation.³ Bezons suggested that, while awaiting confirmation from Colbert, the commissaires act as if this were the minimum and demand 2,400,000 livres as a bargaining point.

Colbert soon informed the commissaires of the king's

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 February, 1671. Depping, I, 267-68.

²Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 22 December, 1671. Ibid., 270.

³Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 12 November, 1672. Ibid., 279-80.

intentions; the don was irrevocably set at 2,000,000 livres; furthermore, the Estates were to grant a loan of 1,600,000 livres for the canal. Henceforth, Colbert informed them, when the king demanded a fixed sum for the don or any other purpose, he intended to receive it with little or no debate and with no reductions of any kind.¹ Colbert also expressed anger at Bezons for daring to ask more than the king had stipulated.² What he realized but would not admit was that in the past the wishes of the king had not always been so firmly fixed. Bezons had continued to employ the tactics of the days when the king's wish was not an absolute rule. Colbert was announcing the new régime by repudiating the tactics of the past.

Not all of the former practices were shelved; Bezons still needed money to bribe important voters whose opinions weighed heavily in the proceedings of the Estates concerning money for the canal project. Bezons' request for money with which to bribe the Estates was granted, but Colbert attached an important condition. Henceforth, Bezons was not to have sole authority in determining where the money was to be spent: the Archbishop of Toulouse (Bonsy) and the intendant were given joint authority in this matter.³ After so many years of exclusive control

¹Colbert to Bezons, 30 November, 1672. Clément, IV, 82.

²Colbert to Bezons, 9 December, 1672. Ibid., 83.

³Colbert to Bezons, 30 November, 1672. Ibid., 81.

over the bribes, Bezons must have been dismayed at the lack of trust Colbert was demonstrating, but the latter probably felt it was wiser to have two men watching each other than to give one sole responsibility.

The king was granted the full amounts he had asked, but it is difficult to determine how much he received. The Archbishop of Toulouse reported that 500,000 livres still remained to be collected for the don of the previous year.¹

The most important aspect of Bezons' career has been described in the preceding pages. Bezons played a major role in the subjugation of the Estates to the will of the central administration by manipulating provincial forces, being knowledgeable about the personalities of the assembly and working industriously at his tasks. In addition, of course, he had strong support from the commis-saires and most important from Colbert and the king. The sole strength of the Estates lay in their ability to refuse to vote money; once the king, through Bezons, had removed most of that power, the Estates became a less formidable force in the politics of Languedoc. They remained an important force in the province, however, for the simple reason that nearly everyone in Languedoc who had any influence was a member of the assembly.

Bezons had many other tasks at the Estates which were not directly related to the procurement of funds.

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 11 December, 1672. Depping, I, 291.

Often, he was forced to mediate among influential members of the Estates, as for example, in the dispute about the presentation of the cahier¹ to the king. The members of the Estates and the Prince of Conti wanted the issue settled before the don was discussed,² but, in a secret letter,³ Bezons maintained that it would be preferable to defer the choice of the delegate until the end of the session, thereby putting all contenders on their best behavior throughout the session.⁴

By far the most important dispute which Bezons was called upon to mediate was that between the Bishop of Albi and the Archbishop of Toulouse, formerly Bishop of Castres. In 1663 the king awarded Castres the Archbishopric of Toulouse, but the Vatican had not sent his seals. This posed a great problem because the king also wanted Castres to preside at the session of the Estates, which entailed taking precedence over the Bishops of Nîmes, Uzès, and Mende, all of whom had seniority over the Bishop of Castres.

¹The cahier was the report on the session containing decisions made by the Estates and questions or demands to be given to the king. Since the presentation of the cahier gave the bearer the right to attend court, the honour was hotly contested.

²Bezons and Conti to Colbert, 6 January, 1662. Depping, I, 54.

³Bezons and Conti were obliged to file a common report which generally contained only the thoughts of Conti. Realizing this, Colbert had ordered Bezons to send separate secret reports which only the king and he would see.

⁴Bezons to Colbert, 6 January, 1662. Depping, I, 57.

As Archbishop of Toulouse, Castres would have encountered no difficulty because an archbishop always had seniority over a bishop, but he was not yet officially an archbishop.

Ordinarily, the king's choice of president was received as such, and a vote was a mere formality. In this case, however, there were several bishops who were in a legitimate position to quarrel with the nominee over the presidency.

Since the Estates had to ratify the king's choice, Colbert was worried that Castres would be rejected.¹ He, therefore, called upon his commissairies to find a method of assuring Castres the position. The solution submitted by Bezons and the marquis of Castres was the one eventually put into practice. They suggested that the Estates be convened on a Friday because everytime the session began on that day, a great number of members did not present themselves until Sunday. If the gathering assembled on Friday, Bezons could be provided with letters for each of the Estates stating the king's desire to nominate the Archbishop of Toulouse to the presidency. Furthermore, Bezons would work assiduously from September until the beginning of the session to assure the attendance on Friday of all the members whom he could trust. In this manner, the president would be chosen before the arrival of those considered to be most hostile to the nomination of

¹Colbert to the Bishop of Castres, 4 September, 1662. Clément, IV, 3.

the Archbishop.¹

The chief obstacle to the king's choice was the Bishop of Albi who claimed seniority over the Bishop of Castres (he did not recognize the appointment of Castres to the higher office). Furthermore, he claimed that the king intended him to be president, not the Bishop of Castres. This argument is specious in the extreme. Albi was so little in favour with the king that Conti finally transferred the Estates from Albi to Pezenas, in spite of the fact that they were scheduled to be held in the former city in that year.²

The opening of the Estates proved the efficacy of Bezons' endeavours of the preceding months. The presidency of Toulouse was assured without dissent by an extraordinarily large gathering.³ In spite of the election of Toulouse, Colbert was ill at ease.⁴ He instructed Bezons to redouble his efforts to reinforce the unity and harmony within the Estates. That Bezons performed this task successfully was demonstrated by the treatment Albi received in the Estates. Having arrived late to the assembly as a result of the scheme devised by Bezons and Castres, Albi

¹Marquis of Castres and Bezons to Colbert, 29 September, 1662. Depping, I, 79.

²Marquis of Castres to Colbert, 31 October, 1662. Ibid., 80.

³Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 24 November, 1662. Ibid., 85.

⁴Colbert to Bezons, 24 November, 1662. Ibid., 87.

was presented with the fait accompli of the election of Toulouse; however, Albi blustered and demanded that the office be given to him since he was the true choice of the king. The vote on this issue left little doubt since only Albi's own ballot favoured his cause. The solidarity of the assembly was due in large measure to the diligence of Bezons. His attempts to reconcile Albi and Toulouse failed, resulting in the early and angry departure of Albi.¹

Albi's absence from the Estates of 1664 precluded a recurrence of the dispute in that year but, in 1665, the battle was rejoined with such bitterness that it created a serious scandal.² A similar dispute arose between the Duke of Verneuil³ and the Archbishop of Toulouse during the Estates of 1673 and again Bezons was called upon to mediate.⁴ As in the case of the Albi-Toulouse strife, Bezons had only limited success, but he did achieve the restoration of sufficient harmony to conclude the session successfully.

The significance of these disputes lies in the fact that an assembly at odds with its president was an assembly which would present difficulty when the don was introduced.

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 8 December, 1662. Depping, I, 95-97.

²Bezons to Colbert, 30 December, 1664. Ibid., 166.

³The Duke of Verneuil, Louis XIV's uncle, was appointed governor of Languedoc to succeed the Prince of Conti who died in 1666.

⁴Cardinal of Bonsy to Colbert, 6 December, 1664. Depping, I, 283.

Other duties of the intendant included accepting petitions presented to him by the Estates to be transmitted to the king if the intendant deemed the issue important enough to receive royal scrutiny.¹ Far more important, however, was the involvement of Bezons in the field of public works which will be discussed below.

As a commissaire of the king, Bezons attended the Estates for twelve years in the era of Colbert, during which time he had acted as the chief strategist, a diplomat, conveyer for Colbert's orders, and as the administration's principal tool in settling disputes and resolving problems. As Louis XIV's reign progressed, the Estates became less intransigent, which should have rendered Bezons' tasks much less difficult; however, as the Estates' power disintegrated, the king exerted greater and greater pressures thereby creating very active resistance with which Bezons had to cope.

Voting funds for the construction of the canal du Midi and the restoration of several ports caused the Estates the most agony. It is impossible to sympathize with the Estates in their resistance to these projects since they were loudest in bemoaning the province's inability to market its products. The construction of the canal and the ports was designed to help Languedoc out of its commercial doldrums, and still the Estates opposed these measures.

¹Bezons and Roure to Colbert, 30 December, 1664. Depping, I, 165.

They were also faced each year with other demands equally onerous. The don rose from 1,500,000 livres in 1662 to 2,000,000 livres in 1673. Furthermore, the king was less amenable to opposition. In 1662 the assembly had at least been able to present the conditions upon which they would grant the don gratuit. By 1665 they were forbidden to impose any conditions whatsoever and in 1671 they were ordered to vote the don without any possibility of compromise with the king. The king and his agents no longer would haggle.

Illustrative of the bewilderment of many members of the Estates over the changed conditions is the following statement of the Bishop of Mirepoix, a member of the Assembly:

. . . I believe that it is always better to discuss before voting the affair of the king, not to do as we did yesterday . . . I have been at the Estates for eighteen years, and we have always had an opportunity to express our opinions, which had more effect on the delegates. . . [than simply forcing the vote through].¹

Certainly one of the major factors in the encroachment of royal authority on the powers of the formerly independent Estates of Languedoc was the diligence of Bezons. Other royal officials attended the Estates but none with

¹Bishop of Mirepoix to Colbert, 10 December, 1672. Depping, I, 287.

" . . . et je crois qu'il est plus à propos de parler lorsqu'on opine pour l'affaire du roy, que non pas d'en user de la façon que nous opinâmes hier. . . Car depuis dix-huit ans que je suis aux étatz, nous avons toujours parlé, cela faisant plus d'effect sur l'esprit de tous les députés. . . ."

the single-minded dedication of the intendant, nor with the knowledge of the province which Bezons had acquired during his twenty-year term. Bezons was always in residence in Languedoc; he knew its ways and people, and he had nearly all the support he required from Colbert, the king, and the commissaires who assisted at the Estates.

Bezons depended entirely upon the continued good will of the king and Colbert, had no interest in the province other than to serve the king, and was generally uncorruptible, a rare phenomenon among seventeenth century French administrators. In dealing with the Estates, he always obeyed to the letter the instructions of Colbert and rarely demonstrated any compassion for the plight of the citizens of Languedoc or any scruples about obeying orders. Had he done so, he probably would have lost his position as intendant, as Colbert indicated by the astonishment with which he greeted the appointment of Rieux as a commissaire, his objection being that Rieux was

. . . a man with an independent mind, guided by principles of conscience which were not always in conformity with the best interests of the king.¹

Obviously Bezons did not have these defects since he held his position for twenty years.

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 December, 1670. Depping, I, 255.

" . . . c'est un esprit assez particulier et dont la conduite se regle bien souvent par des principes de conscience qui ne sont pas toujours conformes au bien du service du roy."

CHAPTER V

BEZONS AND OTHER PROVINCIAL MATTERS

Finance

Although the intendant's role with regard to great matters of finance has been described already in the section which treated the Estates, there were many minor, but important, cases of the involvement of Bezons in financial affairs which did not relate to the Estates. Matters relating to the imposition and collection of taxes were often referred to the intendant by Colbert when local abuses became so blatant that they no longer could be ignored or treated by local officials.

One of the most important measures begun by Colbert in an attempt to increase the revenues of the crown was to order that the intendants make a list of the nobles and an inventory of their titles. Then, an examination could establish whether the individuals claiming exemption from the taille were actually nobles. Those who proved to be false nobles, as they were called, would be considered to be taillable.¹

At the following session of the Estates, Bezons

¹Colbert to the intendants, 30 April, 1666. Clément, VI, 22.

introduced the matter,¹ but it was greeted with great hostility and fear by the nobles in the assembly for two reasons: those who claimed false titles would be discovered, and those who had valid patents of nobility would be put to considerable expense to prove their pedigree. Bezons suggested that the cost of proof be defrayed by the king in cases where valid patents were produced. This was unacceptable because the treasury could not stand any expenditures, even those which would produce future revenue. In the session of 1668, Bezons continued the discussion, since the entire matter was in his hands, with the same reaction.² As the Archbishop of Toulouse pointed out to Colbert, there were so many false nobles in Languedoc that to deprive all of them at once of their nobility and their opportunities to be nobles would cause a very great disturbance, if not a revolt. Similar reports were sent by Bezons and most of the other intendants in the provinces, as well as many influential nobles. As a result, with this, as with so many other enlightened measures, Colbert was forced to let the issue die, and the poor continued to bear the tax burden of the rich.

A more specific example of the involvement of

¹Bezons to Colbert, 4 February, 1667. Depping, I, 227.

²Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 14 January, 1668. Ibid., 234.

Bezons in the affairs of the taille is the case of Pascal, a receveur des comptes (person who received the taxes before they were sent to the Estates), whose books did not balance. His case had been examined in 1657, but the jury had been so favourable to him that instead of finding him guilty of owing large sums to the province, it reached the decision that the province owed him money.¹ The assiette² of Vivarais had decided to empower some of its members to reconvene the case. Bezons wrote to Colbert to warn him of the issue and to ask for instructions; in the meantime, he would refuse to grant permission for the gathering since it was forbidden by law to have assemblies of any sort, other than the assiette, at the diocesan level. The fact that he was preventing the area of Vivarais from regaining money which had been embezzled did not affect the intendant; he was interested only in the legal aspect of the situation. Should Colbert decide to allow the session, then Bezons would pass on the information, but he would not take the initiative; he dared not because Colbert did not permit initiative on the part of his intendants. In any case, Colbert did not want any diminution in the revenues to the king caused by the removal of a tax officer at the crucial tax-collecting season, nor did he

¹Bezons to Colbert, 18 June, 1669. Depping, III, 61.

²The assiette was the committee which assessed the taille at the diocesan level.

want the members of the assiette devoting time to anything which would impede their progress in assessing the taille.

In another case involving taxation, Bezons had discovered that many of the communities which had been assessed their share of the taille often appealed to the chambre des comptes (similar to the cour des aides only restricted to the domaine du roi). Regardless of the honesty of the intentions of any given municipality, the effect was to retard, often indefinitely, the collection of the taille in that area. Colbert, therefore, ratified the draft arrêt drawn up by Bezons forbidding the communities from appealing to the chambres des comptes for a diminution of their assessment.¹ This was the most important abuse in the realm of finance for which Bezons found a remedy acceptable to Colbert and the king.

That Bezons was routinely involved in the collection of the taille and other taxes is proven by a letter he received from Colbert granting him permission to use troops in obtaining the tax.² He did not, however, encourage their use; troops were to be employed only as a last resort. That they were employed more than infrequently is adequately demonstrated by Bauyn, a collector. Without troops, he stated, it would be impossible to levy

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 February, 1671. Depping, I, 268.

²Colbert to Bezons, 29 August, 1670. Ibid., III, 209.

the taxes because people were accustomed to such methods. In this matter, he was deliberately following the pattern set by Pellot.¹

The inefficiency and incompetence of the royal bureaucracy had presented many opportunistic tax-collectors with yet another means of depriving the king of his revenues. Since there never had been drawn up a list of the commoners who owed the freehold (franc-fief) tax, the king had to depend on the traitants' honesty in declaring the receipts of this tax. As a result, Colbert was forced to send a general letter to all intendants with instructions to be on guard against collusion between the traitants and the commoners who paid the tax in order that all money be collected and the receipts declared.² This was a rather difficult order considering the nature of the other tasks of an intendant; therefore, it probably had almost no effect as is indicated by the fact that the following year Colbert attempted to abrogate the king's right to a freehold tax by selling to the commoners the right to the land in perpetuity with no tax of this sort at all. This attempt failed, and the corruption continued.

In the field of finance, Bezons did not interfere unless abuses became too blatant or unless the regular

¹Bauyn to Colbert, 13 February, 1665. Depping, III, 136.

²Colbert to the intendants, 26 May, 1673. Clément, II, 287.

machinery was unable to cope with its problems. For these reasons, Bezons became involved in the fraud being perpetrated by traitants with regard to freehold, in preventing the communities from evading taxes by appealing to the chambres des comptes, and in employing troops in the numerous cases of unbending refusal to pay taxes. In addition to these duties, it must be remembered, Bezons was called upon to attend the sessions of the Estates in order to facilitate the granting of the don gratuit. His importance in the field of finance is, therefore, manifest.

Public Works

In the section concerned with Bezons' activity at the Estates of Languedoc, much has been written about the difficulties he experienced in coercing the assembly to vote appropriations for the development of public works. This section will attempt to treat the role of the intendant in the progress of several public works which the king and Colbert believed to be necessary for the commercial development of the province of Languedoc. Among these projects were the construction of a canal joining the Atlantic and the Mediterranean (canal du Languedoc), and the construction of a canal joining Beaucaire and Aigues-Mortes which, with a little extra construction, would provide a water highway from Lyon to Bordeaux which would not leave the boundaries of France. This highway would make use of the canal du Languedoc and

several of the canals joining various lakes¹ and inter-connecting canals between Agde and Aigues-Mortes. Other projects were generally connected to this grand design -- the restoration of the port of Sète, the construction of a môle² at Agde to hold back the sand, and the drainage of the marshes of Aigues-Mortes all contributed to the development of trading potential of Languedoc.

As the chief royal functionary continuously in the province, Bezons was often called upon to perform certain duties to further the achievements of the engineers in any of the several public works going on in Languedoc. Since the Languedoc canal was undoubtedly the most important public work undertaken in the Colbert era, in the south of France, at least, it would be well to describe the role played in this great achievement by Bezons.

On 26 November, 1662, Riquet, an amateur engineer, presented to Colbert a proposal for opening the navigation of France from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic³ which the contrôleur général approved. Two months later, an

¹These lakes, referred to as étangs, are shallow bodies of water which are separated from the sea (Mediterranean) by a narrow strip of land through which canals could be, and often were, dug to permit sea transport. The problem was that the Languedociens had let the canals fall apart.

²A môle is a pier of a special sort. Not only does it serve as a place to tie up boats, but it also keeps out the sands which the Mediterranean inexorably deposited into the port.

³Riquet de Bourepes to Colbert, 26 November, 1662. Clément, IV, 303.

arrêt of the king's council was published telling the commissaires at the Estates of Languedoc to investigate the project with members of the assembly.¹ The commission did not meet until a year later and did not really begin to investigate the plan until January, 1665. In the meantime, however, Bezons and his committee sent several engineers and other experts to examine the projected route of the canal.

Once Riquet had begun to dig the experimental canal, Bezons was constantly on the scene, examining the work and sending reports to Colbert. In many of these reports, the intendant demonstrated that he had performed his task with great diligence, often criticized and made suggestions which demonstrated a technical knowledge beyond the ordinary; he had probably spent much time learning about canal construction.² Bezons was certainly no engineer, but Colbert could have chosen a worse watch-dog to place at Riquet's side. In June, 1669, an inspection of the progress on the canal carried out by Bezons revealed two defective locks. Colbert expressed his thanks:

The exactitude that you showed on your visit to all the works of Riquet will have many advantages, not only because of the promise he made you to repair the two defective locks which you discovered, but also because in the future he will be more careful,

¹Clément, IV, 304, note 1.

²Bezons to Colbert, 16 November, 1665. Depping, I, 38, note

thereby rendering the work more solid than it has been.¹

Bezons' assiduous conduct was often rewarded with such praise, which was well earned because Riquet was not among the realm's most honest and disinterested subjects.

The intendant was forced to contend with other problems relative to this great canal. Among these were the difficulties of financing it, the disputes brought about by the expropriations of land and the revolts provoked by the edict empowering Riquet with the ferme de gabelle to enable him to finance the project. Among the wisest steps Bezons took with regard to financing the project was to convince several important members of the Estates to visit the port of Sète and see for themselves not only how expertly the work was being done, but also how valuable such construction would be to the province. This took place in 1670, in which year the Estates voted 2,000,000 livres to the canal to be paid over a period of five years. Bezons' activities while attending the yearly meetings of the Estates have been discussed in the section which considered that body, but it would be well to reiterate that he usually managed to acquire a favourable

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 June, 1669. Clément, IV, 330.

"L'exactitude que vous avez apportée à la visite de tous les ouvrages du sîeru Riquet y procurera assurément beaucoup d'avantages, non-seulement par la promesse qu'il vous a faite de raccommoder les deux écluses que vous avez trouvées mal faites, mais mesme parce qu'il sera encore plus exact à l'avenir et que les ouvrages seront assurément plus solides qu'ils n'ont esté par le passé."

vote from the Estates through coercion and his persuasive powers, which included large scale bribery.

A particularly difficult element of Bezons' task relative to the canal was the evaluation of the lands through which it was to pass. The king and Colbert had left the assessment completely in the hands of the intendant, but they expressed some concern for the expense. Colbert informed Bezons of the king's fears that if all the lands along the canal were assessed as noble, the cost of expropriations would be staggering.¹ At the same time, however, they both expressed satisfaction with, and confidence in, the abilities of Bezons. When the intendant performed a task, the king and Colbert were confident that he would act in the sole interests of the king.

The trust placed in the judgment and honesty of Bezons indicates the value of the intendency to the central administration. Of all the royal officials who performed duties in the généralités, only the intendant could be depended upon for continued disinterested activity on behalf of the king. These statements apply, of course, only to the "good" intendants such as Bezons, Pellot, and Daguesseau. In the case of the canal du Languedoc, the interest demonstrated by Bezons was a major factor in aiding and, sometimes, forcing Riquet to carry out the obligations contracted to the king; nevertheless, it was

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 February, 1671. Depping, I, 268.

to be many years before the canal was finally able to bear water traffic.

The construction of a canal from Beaucaire to Aigues-Mortes and the drainage of the marshes of Aigues-Mortes were part of the great design for an internal water system from Lyon to Bordeaux. However, the project for Eastern Languedoc was under different management and encountered different problems than did Riquet's canal. The first objection was raised by merchants who feared that the new lands would produce so much wheat that the market would be depressed. For this reason, a compromise was reached whereby the reclaimed land would be divided into three parts -- one-third for wheat, one-third for woods, and one-third for meadow.¹

Nevertheless, the opposition continued. Brun, the engineer in charge of draining the marshes, listed other objections to the plan.² The bishops feared that opening the new lands would produce mass desertion of the villages in their dioceses. As Brun point out, the reclaimed land would support no more than one hundred men (actually it would be closer to one thousand) so that the villages would hardly be deserted. Furthermore, the new lands were in the dioceses of the same bishops who objected on the grounds that they would lose some of their popula-

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 15 January, 1663. Depping, I, 114.

²Brun to Colbert, February, 1664. Ibid., 153.

tion. A final rebuttal was that every year more than ten thousand Frenchmen from villages near the marshes left the country to work in Spain; surely it would be better to keep as many of these in the province as possible. Another argument was that the canal would submerge vast areas of land. This argument, seriously presented, was so ridiculous that Brun did not even bother to comment.

The opposition may have been ridiculous, but it was certainly effective. Bezons reported that when the proposal was presented to the members of the Estates, opposition was so violent that the best solution they could reach was to forbid discussion of the plan in the Estates. Despite the opposition, Bezons intended to commence construction. Letters obtained from the king's council empowered him to carry out the project, or so he said.¹ On 24 February, 1665, Bezons reported his failure to convince those with vested interests in the trade of the province that the canal ought to be built and the marshes drained.² However, he did not believe that the work already begun on the projects ought to be slackened. The opponents of the development of Aigues-Mortes would finally have to send all their grievances to the king's council, where they would be rejected. The decision

¹Bezons to Colbert, 29 January, 1663. Depping, I, 119.

²Bezons to Colbert, 24 February, 1663. Ibid., 195.

reached by the council would be binding and the work could continue at an accelerated pace.

The documents are silent on the final decision of the council, but it appears that Bezons' prognostications proved correct. In 1671 Colbert ordered Penautier¹ to find twenty men willing to undertake the drainage of the marshes of Aigues-Mortes, and he wrote again to chastise him for failing to do so. Since it is unlikely that Colbert would encourage the expenditure of funds for a project he knew to be illegal and which, therefore, would probably be halted by court proceedings, rendering the expenditures useless, the plan must have been authorized. Nothing more is mentioned about this development, either in the documents relevant to Bezons' career or in those concerning Daguesseau; therefore, one must assume that the rest of the construction proceeded smoothly.

During the intendancy of Bezons, a beginning was made to the discussion of the improvements to be made to the harbour facilities of the province. Since several manufacturers complained that they could not ship goods out of the province due to the poor condition of the harbours, Bezons had studies conducted on many of the ports and then brought the matter to the attention of the Estates in 1665.

The opposition of the members of the assembly is

¹Colbert to Penautier, 20 March, 1671. Depping, III, 877.

astonishing. Many of the most important bishops and nobles expressed hostility towards these developments on no particular grounds.¹ The specific proposals made by Bezons included reconstruction of the môle² of Agde and the graux³ in many parts of the province. Both of these measures would have done immeasurable good to commerce throughout the province, but these issues ran counter to the special interests of the members of the Estates. In many cases when individuals had no special interest in the matter, they voted against the measure on the grounds that the province could not afford the additional expenses. The flaw in that argument was that the whole industry of Languedoc was wallowing in a sea of inactivity because no one in the province realized that additional ports and harbour facilities would increase the wealth of all by increasing the ability to conduct business through trade. Those who realized the truth of this statement were content with conditions just as they were.

Bezons attempted to explain this to the Estates and succeeded in acquiring enough converts that the assembly voted a small sum to begin some of the works; however, much missionary work would have to be done to con-

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 14 February, 1665. Depping, I, 183.

²See p.175 note

³The graux were the short canals which joined the etangs (lakes) to the Mediterranean.

vert the unbelievers to the cause of the môles and graux. It is true that the Estates voted money in 1665, but the 40,000 livres did not go far; Bezons estimated the cost of the môle of Agde at 500,000 livres, and that was only a small part of the amount of work to be done in the province.¹

The initial steps had been made in many public works projects in Languedoc, but Bezons was not destined to see their completion, with the possible exception of the drainage of the marshes of Aigues-Mortes. The canal had been begun but completion was by no means imminent by the end of Bezons' intendancy; construction had begun on several graux and on the môle of Agde, while the port of Sète was receiving the attention it merited. But the mills of the seventeenth century engineer-contractor ground slowly, even when a good intendant was there to supervise, encourage and assist. Money was slow in coming and its procurement created difficulties for the intendant and the Estates. The latter usually employed dilatory tactics in the hope that payment could be delayed indefinitely as, for example, in the case of the funds for the drainage of Aigues-Mortes.

These projects were all important to the commerce and industry of Languedoc, and eventually most were imple-

¹Bezons to Colbert, 24 February, 1665. Depping, I, 193.

mented. A large part of the credit must go to the intendant who helped Languedoc to help itself.

Commerce

Very little is known about the involvement of Bezons in the affairs of trade and commerce in Languedoc.¹ There can be little doubt that he concerned himself with these matters, but his time was limited because of the requisite two or three months attendance at the Estates and the supervision of the canals.

When the Estates deputized to Bezons about a tax which they feared would be imposed on the paper manufacture in Annonay, they were demonstrating that they considered Bezons competent in matters relevant to commerce. A tax, they feared, would be devastating to the commerce of the region.²

Of course, the intendant functioned in an advisory role, giving first-hand advice to Colbert about means of improving the trade of the various communities in Languedoc. In 1665 Bezons reported on the state of the manufacturing industries in Montpellier, Nîmes, Uzès and

¹For detailed treatment of the development of commercial and industrial enterprises in Languedoc see P. Boissonnade, "Colbert, son système et les entreprises industrielles d'état en Languedoc (1661-1683)," Annales du Midi, 1902, 5-49, and "La restauration et le développement de l'industrie en Languedoc au temps de Colbert", Annales du Midi, 1906. 441-472.

²Roure and Bezons to Colbert, 16 December, 1664. Depping, I, 157.

Gévaudan.¹ All were prospering, he stated, but something would have to be done for the cloth manufacturers of Carcassonne. He recommended that their cloths be improved in order to achieve a standard high enough to satisfy people of wealth so that imports from Holland and England would be rendered unnecessary. Bezons had made such a recommendation to the merchants of the area and they had agreed to try. Furthermore, the committee of merchants with which he had just met had made several suggestions which Bezons stated he would edit and send to Colbert. Colbert eventually acted upon the suggestion to assist the manufacturers of woolen cloth in Carcassonne as is indicated by a letter written to him by Penautier, a ubiquitous and very wealthy being whose official function was treasurer of the Estates.² In this letter, Penautier reminded Colbert of the money he had promised to procure for the wool manufacturers in Carcassonne. A succeeding letter mentioned that Colbert had given similar aid in previous years, and that he would be doing a great service to the trade of Languedoc by continuing the practice.³ Evidently the cloth was of such inferior quality that it could not be sold.

Apparently Colbert had received several requests to

¹Bezons to Colbert, 24 February, 1665. Depping, I, 191.

²Penautier to Colbert, 5 April, 1669. Ibid., III, 805-6.

³Penautier to Colbert, 12 April, 1669. Ibid., 806-7.

direct the king's revenues to shoring up industries which were doomed to disaster in any case. On 17 February, 1671, Colbert published a general circular to the mayors and aldermen in all cities announcing that the poor quality of cloth being manufactured in France was of such great concern to the king that inspectors would be sent to all fairs. Defective cloths would be exposed and the manufacturers and merchants along with them. This was only one of the many ordinances published by Colbert in an attempt to improve the quality of French cloth, but he was waging a battle against terrific odds, as he well knew.

To aid him in his fight, Colbert turned to Bezons. He instructed the intendant to investigate the cloth industry in Languedoc with an eye to ascertaining the accuracy of the many grievances he had received from the manufacturers. Colbert made no secret of his lack of sympathy with the merchants who were objecting to the regulations published to improve the quality of the cloth and, thereby, to increase the trade and wealth of the province. The merchants were always the last to bend before regulations which would improve their own lot; they preferred to make no changes and plead for hand-outs from the king. Colbert wished to prevent this by enforcing the edicts and ordinances. Bezons' assignment was to investigate the effect of the ordinances.

¹Depping, III, 874.

Bezons carried out his study of the industry in Languedoc and learned that the merchants who traded in the Levant had rescinded orders placed for woolen goods from Carcassonne, which would mean the ruin of the industry there. As Colbert well knew, the orders had been rescinded because the inferior quality of the cloth made sales in the Levant impossible. For this reason, he coldly informed Bezons¹ that no assistance would be forthcoming from Paris. The merchants of Carcassonne would have to suffer the consequences of their resistance to change.²

Another matter entrusted by Colbert to Bezons involved salvage rights on ships wrecked on the coasts of Languedoc and Provence. The particular ships with which this issue dealt had come from Hamburg and foundered on the Mediterranean coast. Colbert feared that if such ships were pillaged, then the same thing would happen to French shipping in foreign waters; therefore, Colbert had ordered that no pillaging take place and the intendant was instructed to enforce that order and to make certain that the merchandise on the ships was restored to its owners. In case the officers of the admiralty participated in

¹Colbert to Bezons, 2 October, 1671. Depping, III, 878-79.

²For more information on Colbert's assistance to the cloth industry of Languedoc, see W. Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, II, 132-238.

robbing the ships, Bezons was ordered to begin legal proceedings against them. If necessary, arrêts would be made available on request to the king's council.¹

Thus, although Bezons' role in the expansion of commerce in his généralités is not detailed in the documents, one must remember that he devoted much time to improving the facilities which would make commerce and shipping much easier; the port construction, canal development, and erection of môles were all designed to increase the commercial potential of Languedoc.

Municipal Affairs

Potentially one of the most important measures of the era of Colbert was the verification and liquidation of municipal debts. This was rendered necessary by the dishonest and incompetent borrowing practices of municipal officers.

Up to the time of Louis XIV, communities had had control over their own finances and had been at liberty to borrow money to meet obligations either to the king or to various contractors for work done in the community. These debts were legitimate expenses, but the money-lenders charged illegally exorbitant rates of interest and demanded community property as security. Since the communities could not obtain the money elsewhere, they were forced to

¹Colbert to Bezons, 12 February, 1672. Clément, II, 644.

borrow from these individuals. Furthermore, in many cases, the municipal officers were relatives of the money-lenders or were able to derive extra sources of income from accepting bribes from them. Since the communities kept the books very poorly, if at all, the money-lenders could claim debts from them which had never been contracted.

Consequent upon the impoverishment of the communities was their inability to pay the taille; Colbert, therefore, began to take a very special interest in the financial condition of all communities in the realm, beginning in Languedoc and Guyenne. In 1662 Bezons was instructed to do his best to see to the liquidation of debts of the communities.¹ In effect, this meant that all debts would have to be verified by a commission appointed by the intendant or, at least, supervised by him. The commission would have to examine the demands made upon each community in each parish in the province, sifting fiction from fact and deciding whether the debts had really been contracted and whether the interest rates had been illegally high.

Bezons' commission could have done the task assigned to it had not the Estates taken a considerable interest in the issue. Although the commission worked independently of the Estates, the funds for its members had to be voted in the assembly. In previous years, the funds had either come from the king or they had been voted with-

¹Colbert to Bezons, 3 October, 1662. Depping, I, 82.

out protest, but in 1664 the matter was brought to the assembly and created a bitter struggle between the Archbishop of Toulouse and Bezons on one side and the Estates on the other.¹

Toulouse reported that, although the liquidation of the debts of the communities would be of immense benefit to the entire province, it would harm particular vested interests. Those individuals who earned their money from lending to the communities and the nobles who controlled many of the communities would be hurt by the new developments. According to Toulouse, nearly all members of the Estates fell into either or both categories. Of those members of the assembly who opposed expenditures for the commission on grounds other than purely selfish ones, many feared that the commission would take too long. It had already taken three years to complete the verification of the debts of Agde, which had only seventeen parishes and of Lodève which had forty-five. Since there were twenty-four dioceses in Languedoc, it would seem that the objections were justified.

On 5 January, 1665 Bezons reported to Colbert that the cost for the commission could be as low as 50,000 livres spread over two years.² Most of this money could have been extracted from the Estates, asserted Toulouse,

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 8 February, 1664. Depping, I, 151.

²Bezons to Colbert, 5 January, 1665. Ibid., 173-4.

had not the information leaked out that the king was willing, if necessary, to give 20,000 livres for 1665.¹ As it developed, the Estates voted 20,000 livres for 1666 and let the king pay for the commissions' salaries for 1665.²

Periodically throughout the rest of the intendency of Bezons, Colbert wrote letters encouraging him to stimulate the commission to greater efforts. The salary distribution on the commission was Bezons' preserve which gave him some real power; nevertheless, Colbert took an interest even in this matter. Having received a complaint from Boyer, first syndic of the Estates of Languedoc, that Montbel had received more money for doing less work, Colbert wrote to Bezons expressing his disapproval. In this case, Colbert had a personal interest because Montbel had been a favourite of the late Prince of Conti and, as such, had engaged with impunity in many activities detrimental to the affairs of the king. Colbert's revenge was to order Bezons to deprive Montbel of any salary for his efforts. In addition, Bezons was to account for the inequitable distribution of funds available to the commission.³

Toulouse provides a good case history of the pro-

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 14 February, 1665. Depping, I, 187.

²Bezons to Colbert, 24 February, 1665. Ibid., 191.

³Colbert to Bezons, 5 March, 1666. Clément, IV, 44-5.

gress and methods of the commission in liquidating community debts. The city had managed to amass a total debt, by its own account, of over 2,000,000 livres. By an agreement with the king's council, Toulouse had promised to repay its creditors in the order in which the debts had been contracted. However, in 1665, two of the creditors demanded immediate payment which prompted the capitouls (aldermen) to request Colbert to force the two men to obey the agreement.¹ One deduces from the laudatory note sent from Toulouse to Colbert later in the year that the request had been granted.²

The problems of Toulouse were not terminated with the approval of the delay of its creditors. Nevertheless, by 1670, the creditors had begun to submit to Bezons' commission the proofs of money lent to the city. Since Bezons could not be in Toulouse at the time, Colbert instructed him to work through, and with, the president of the parlement of that city, Fieubet.³ According to the deputies of Toulouse who had gone to Paris to present their case, the city had acquitted itself of 400,000 livres since 1661 and had had to borrow only 120,000 livres in that time. The deputies objected that the city

¹Capitouls of Toulouse to Colbert, 13 May, 1665. Depping, I, 750.

²Capitouls of Toulouse to Colbert, 16 December, 1665. Ibid., 751.

³Colbert to Bezons, 14 November, 1670. Ibid., III, 210.

could not pay its debts if the members of the commission for the verification of debts continued to appropriate funds for their own use. Colbert instructed Bezons to look into this to ascertain the accuracy of the accusation.

Bezons complied with the orders of Colbert in very quick fashion. He gave the lie to every statement made by the deputies of Toulouse but could not be certain of the amount of debt which had been repaid nor of the amount borrowed by the city since 1661.¹ The problem was that the city refused to allow the commission to examine its books. This, it finally agreed to do in January, 1671.² It is little wonder that the commission performed its task in such a sluggish fashion. For ten years it had been working on the verification of the debts of Toulouse but only in 1671 was it able to obtain the promise that the city would permit it access to the books. Colbert was not yet convinced that the Toulousians would not erect new barriers to the commission's investigations; therefore, he instructed Fieubet to make haste before new impediments were invented.

Bezons relied almost entirely upon Fieubet to carry out Colbert's instructions with regard to the li-

¹Colbert to Bezons, 12 December, 1670. Clément, IV, 51-2.

²Colbert to Fieubet, 9 January, 1671. Ibid., 52, note 1.

quidation of the debts of Toulouse, since Fieubet was the first president of the parlement of that city. In January, 1671, Fieubet was instructed by Colbert to farm out several duties on goods used in the city, the revenues from which would be diverted to pay the debts.¹ This Fieubet could do only with the permission of the intendant, which he received.

Later in the same year, Colbert informed Fieubet of his pleasure on hearing that the verification of debts of Toulouse was nearly completed, but reminded him that the goal was to eradicate the debts, not merely to become aware of them.² The capitouls must be pressed to carry out their end of the agreement.

In another letter, Colbert reported that he had received a deputation from Toulouse demanding that Fieubet be removed from his post as delegate of Bezons' commission and that he not be replaced, because he had imposed on the city a yearly payment of 36,000 livres in order to free it of its debt. Not only would the king not agree to the deputation's demands, but he insisted on prompt payment of the money. The deputation had deprived itself of any right to be heard by ignoring the rules established by the king: any community wishing to delegate to the king had first to present its case to the intendant who would de-

¹Colbert to Fieubet, 23 January, 1671. Depping, I, 816.

²Colbert to Fieubet, 31 May, 1671. Ibid., 817.

termine whether the issue merited the king's attention.¹ In this case, the capitouls did not present their grievance to Bezons because his commission had determined the size of the annual remuneration to their creditors. In either contingency, Toulouse was doomed to have its request denied.

Despite the continued opposition of the influential citizens of Toulouse, therefore, the commission had been able to carry out the project of liquidating the debts of Toulouse.

Not all opposition to the commissions for liquidation of communal debts was expressed by deputations. In Montpellier riots broke out, and the king finally exiled Sartre, a councillor in the cour des aides, to Nantes.² Sartre apparently had triggered the riots by opposing the registration of the arrêt which established in Montpellier an excise tax destined to pay the city's debts. According to Sartre, however, the fault had not been his. He described the incident in the following manner: the arrêt had been presented in the court with opposition from the bishops. Outside the chamber, the mob had gathered fearing that the king was trying to impose a great new tax to raise revenues beyond the debts

¹Colbert to Fieubet, 26 February, 1672. Depping, I, 819.

²Colbert to the bishop of Castres, 22 September, 1662. Clément, IV, 4.

of the city. Upon leaving the assembly, Sartre had been accosted by members of the mob who pleaded that he oppose the tax, which he refused; at the same time, the marquis of Castres arrived and, seeing him at the head of the mob, arrested him.¹

To this point, Bezons had not been involved in the dispute, but Colbert, able to trust without qualification the impartiality of the intendant, requested that he investigate the seditious behavior of the inhabitants of Montpellier. Various people had interceded for Sartre so that Colbert needed specific information in order to determine the guilt of the councillor.²

Another area in which Bezons had some considerable authority relative to municipal affairs was the choice of consuls (municipal officers). In the village of Revel, the election of the consul created an annual disturbance of no mean proportions. In 1664 the problem was even more acute because it was Revel's turn to send a consul to the Estates. The solution proposed by the Archbishop of Toulouse required that Colbert obtain a lettre de cachet ordering the chief justice of Revel not to choose a consul until he had conferred with either the Archbishop of

¹Sartre to Colbert, 22 September, 1662. Depping, IV, 665-67.

²Colbert to Bezons, 3 October, 1662. Ibid., I, 82-3.

Toulouse or Bezons.¹

A similar case occurred in Rabastens, which was being devastated by divisions over the choice of a consul.² A previous election had been solved by Bezons who simply sent an ordinance to the town ordering the election of men chosen by the intendant. The bishop proposed the same solution for the crisis of 1667. Should the individuals who opposed Bezons' candidate be elected, he asserted, the town would be pillaged mercilessly. Enough instances of the intendant's participation in election of consuls are extant to permit one to generalize that Bezons was often involved in affairs of this nature.

There remains for discussion only one facet of the intendant's career in municipal affairs, namely his role as a filter for the problems which the municipalities wished to present directly to the king. All communities were ordered to obtain clearance from the intendant before deputizing to the king about local grievances. Failure to comply would be treated severely, that is, the request or grievance would be ignored. Such was the fate of the deputation from Toulouse protesting the presence of Fieubet in the city as a commissioner for the inquiry into community debts.³ Gradually the municipalities became used to this

¹Archbishop of Toulouse to Colbert, 1 December, 1664. Depping, I, 735.

²Bishop of Saint-Papoul to Colbert, September, 1667. Ibid., 797.

³See above, p. 194-95.

rule, although it is impossible to say how long it was in effect. In 1671 the merchants of Nîmes, at least, recognized the new regulation when they wished to present a recommendation to the king about improvements in trade practice.¹ If the rest of the organizations and communities adopted the same practice, the intendant was probably involved in nearly every aspect of life in the province since multitudinous groups were prone to deputize to the king.

In summary, the municipal affairs in which Bezons was involved were extremely important and varied. He was the key figure in the liquidation of the debts of some of the communities in Languedoc; he had a very significant voice in the election of consuls, many of whom attended the sessions of the Estates; and he had to approve any deputation which desired to reach the king.

Justice

The documentary evidence concerning the involvement of Bezons in the affairs of justice is scanty, but it is unlikely that a man with such a high reputation as a magistrate (he was avocat général in the grand conseil) as Bezons had² would not have become immersed in legal matters.

The Vivarais was an area which often demonstrated

¹Colbert to Bezons, 26 February, 1671. Depping, I, 268.

²See p. 135.

its inability to cope with the attempts to establish monolithic central government. In 1665 Bezons and Tubeuf, a relative, were sent to that area to discover the reasons behind the continual uprisings and lawlessness in Vivarais.¹ The only viable solution they discovered was to send a présidial from Nîmes since the local officers could not be trusted to restore and maintain order and justice.

By 1669 it was becoming apparent that there would be a famine in Vivarais. The winter had killed most of the fig and olive trees in the area and had raised the price of coal out of reasonable proportion. In addition, there was talk of imposing a new personal tax, the capi-tation. The result was a revolt caused by panic amongst the poor. (The wealthy did not participate in the revolt.)²

According to E. LeRoy Ladurie, the revolt of the Vivarais was a instinctive non-rational reaction to a typical rural crisis. The peasants did not attack the king, whom they continued to cherish, but the idea of Power, that abstract and distant creature which imposed taxes and hardships for which the peasants could see no

¹The commissaires of the king at the Estates of Languedoc to Colbert, 7 December, 1665. Depping, II, 170.

²For a description of this revolt, see Leon Bernard's article on popular uprisings under Louis XIV previously cited, and E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, Vol. VII, pt. 1, pp. 348-50. Lavissee states that the revolt was led by Antoine du Roure, a gentilhomme and former army officer (as was Audijos) whereas Bernard only mentions "a certain Antoine Roure" (p. 462). In any case, they both seem to agree that the revolt was basically a lower class movement despite the status of the leader.

reasons and from which they received no returns.¹

Bezons granted an amnesty to the inhabitants, with a few exceptions.² Despite the fact that the area had become quiescent, Colbert wanted to send troops to the Vivarais in order to ensure continued peace. Since the troubles were over, he told Bezons, the intendant could leave the area and tend to other problems. This indicates that, like Pellot, Bezons had been involved in the task of quelling a revolt; nor was he given any less authority to punish the rebels. Colbert requested that the intendant send to Marseilles all convicts whom he had condemned to the galleys.³

Another type of involvement in the affairs of justice which Bezons was called upon to treat was the matter of the sovereign courts. Colbert had experienced difficulty with the intransigent parlement of Toulouse,⁴ and had had to exile some of its councillors. For this

¹E. Le Roy Ladurie, Les paysans de Languedoc, 2 Vols. Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966, I, 611. See also Gérard Walter, Histoire des paysans de France. Paris: Flammarion, 1963, 286-290, and Bernard, "French Society and Popular Uprisings under Louis XIV", 462-64.

²Colbert to Bezons, 15 August, 1670. Depping, III, 208.

³Colbert to Bezons, 22 August, 1670. Ibid., 208-9.

⁴Colbert to Fieubet, 31 January, 1671. Ibid., II, 190.

reason, he was pleased to hear that Bezons had sent thirty forçats to the galleys in spite of the protests of that court.¹ This was only one of the many disagreements which the intendant had with the parlement, but it is alone in being clearly elucidated in the documents available for this thesis.

Other matters pertaining to justice in which Bezons played a role are not indicated by the documents, with the exception of a recommendation for a strong replacement for the dying Count of Bieule as chief judicial officer in the very turbulent area of Carcassone.² This is not to say that he did not concern himself with judicial matters; indeed, even the few cases presented here either have been pieced together from several hints dropped by Colbert's various correspondents or they have merely been mentioned in passing in the letters of Colbert and Bezons. In judicial matters, therefore, Bezons did not often feel compelled to consult Colbert. Certainly, however, Bezons was much less involved in judicial affairs than was Pellot.

Bezons' career as intendant of Languedoc was certainly not as varied or as exciting as that of Pellot in Guyenne. Bezons had had only one minor revolt with which

¹Colbert to Bezons, 24 July, 1671. Depping, II, 938.

²Bezons to Colbert, 20 April, 1666. Ibid., I, 218.

to contend, and that was easily settled. In the realm of justice, finance and commerce, his career was not insignificant, but the regular machinery usually conducted these affairs. Only in exceptional cases did he become involved. Nevertheless, the contribution of Bezons to the administration of Languedoc was great; without his zealous activity, the canal du Languedoc would not have achieved the intention it deserved, nor would Riquet have been as closely supervised as he needed to be. The restoration of many ports was due to his efforts. In municipal affairs, Bezons played an extremely important role as head of the commission to liquidate municipal debts which nearly every community in Languedoc had incurred.

But most important from the point of view of the king and Colbert, Bezons had been the most active and effective instrument of the central government resident at the entire proceedings of most of the sessions of the Estates. He had persuaded and coerced members to vote money necessary to Louis' campaign for gloire. He had been a very effective trouble-shooter when crises developed in the Estates and had usually managed to derive the maximum benefit for the king from any circumstances which weakened those from whom Bezons wished to obtain something. Gradually, the powers of the Estates declined under steady pressure from Colbert and the king, usually applied by

Bezons. The assembly was rarely a rubber stamp for the demands of the king, but the efforts of Bezons helped to convince it of the futility of continued resistance.

If Bezons was a sensitive and compassionate man, he performed miracles in disguising that fact from contemporary and historian alike. He was an efficient and ruthless arm of the central government who would define "good" as "that which will please Colbert and the king". With such a man in charge of the intendancy of Languedoc, Colbert had every reason to be content.

CHAPTER VI

DAGUESSEAU AND THE ESTATES, FINANCE

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Henri Daguesseau is the best known of the three intendants described in this thesis for no very admirable reason. He was an honest and sincere man whose virtues were numerous,¹ but he is remembered best as one of the most active persecutors of the Huguenots before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, and as the father of the long lived chancellor Daguesseau (1668-1750).

Daguesseau served as intendant in Languedoc from August 1673 to 1687 during which time he was involved in matters similar to those which preoccupied both Pellot and Bezons. In many cases, he carried on the work begun by Bezons but in others he made a fresh start. The Estates had been tamed by Bezons and were generally supervised by Bonsy, the Archbishop of Toulouse (promoted to cardinal in 1673). Since the don gratuit no longer required diligent efforts on the part of the intendant, Daguesseau had time to devote to other matters. In the

¹P. Gachon, Quelques préliminaires de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes en Languedoc (1661-1685), Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1899, 162-63.

field of finance, he drew up lists of the province's resources, investigated and supervised the collection of many of the taxes and generally served the interests of the king.

Bezons had done much with regard to the cloth industry and Daguesseau carried on the tradition. Furthermore, the latter involved himself more deeply in the matter of exporting wheat, removing tolls from water highways, and ensuring orthodoxy in mercantilist practice. In public works and municipal affairs, Daguesseau furthered the policies of his predecessor particularly with regard to the completion of the canal du Languedoc and the liquidation of community debts. Daguesseau demonstrated a greater interest in the judicial system of the province and worked diligently to detect corruption and inefficiency as well as to draft proposals for change. His involvement in the persecution of the Huguenots has been mentioned, and his zeal in that matter will be discussed. An excellent intendant, Daguesseau aptly served his masters in Paris.

The Estates

The activities of Henri Daguesseau while attending the sessions of the Estates are not well described by the documents available.¹ However, there is sufficient

¹Of the more than 300 pages of documents concerning the Estates which appear in Depping, only 15 treat the role of Daguesseau in that assembly.

material to form a general idea of the scope of his role. The Cardinal of Bonsy had acquired increased influence at the Estates upon achieving the rank of cardinal. Even during the era of Bezons, Bonsy had become more powerful. For example, Colbert gave him joint control with the intendant over the funds used to bribe reluctant voters in the Estates. Daguesseau was a new intendant in Languedoc and unfamiliar with the customs and people of the province; therefore, nothing could be more reasonable than for Colbert to augment the trusted cardinal's already considerable authority in the Estates, rather than attempt to establish Daguesseau in a position of superiority. In any case, it would have been difficult to subject Bonsy to the intendant.

Thus Daguesseau found that the powers and authority enjoyed by Bezons at the Estates were beyond his own reach. Nevertheless, he remained a commissaire of the king at the Estates and, as such, was obliged to attend the sessions and file reports. The fact that the powers of the intendant had been decreased loses some of its importance when one considers the altered role and nature of the Estates. No longer was it so necessary to manipulate the members in order to achieve a successful vote on the don; the vote had become automatic. A good president could hold the sessions in line and obtain all that the king desired.

The role of the intendant had changed in other

ways as well. Whereas Bezons had attempted to obtain the maximum from the Estates, Daguesseau often appealed to the king on behalf of the assembly for a reduction of the don and for measures which would enable the province to pay its debts more easily.¹ Daguesseau's principal responsibilities at the Estates were, however, the sessions, to ascertain the temper of the gathering and to mediate the occasional dispute among its members.² Furthermore, the intendant's duties had altered in another respect: whereas Bezons had been required to ascertain the amount which the Estates would grant for the don gratuit, Daguesseau was ordered to attempt to determine the amount which the province could pay.³

Finance

With a reduced role in the affairs of the Estates, Daguesseau began to function more like Pellot than like Bezons. Many of the activities of all three were similar but Pellot and Daguesseau could give more thought to the general duties of an intendant than could Bezons who had been preoccupied with the Estates. The

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 October, 1680. Clément, IV, 128, note.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 14 December, 1674. Ibid., 10, note 1.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 October, 1680. Ibid., 128, note.

primary duties of Daguesseau in financial affairs were the same as those of Pellot; he was to carry out instructions relating to finance, to investigate abuses, and to suggest methods of improving the existing financial situation.

One of the most contentious issues with which Daguesseau had to contend was the tax imposed by the king on paper used in official documents (the papier timbré). Among the groups which violently protested the tax were the clergy and the nobility of Languedoc, both of which wanted to hold special sessions to discuss the affair. That request was denied by Colbert¹ but the protests had some effect. The opposition to the tax had been so great that it had been almost impossible to collect; therefore, Colbert informed all intendants that the tax had been suppressed. In its place would be a general tax on the manufacture of all paper and parchment used in each généralité.² The king needed money immediately and since it was obvious that the first tax could not be collected because of resistance on the part of the upper classes, Colbert had to find one which would distribute the burden more heavily on the lower classes. The protests about this imposition were even louder than about the papier

¹Cardinal of Bonsy to Colbert, 16 December, 1673. Depping, I, 301.

²Colbert to the intendants, 19 April, 1674. Clément, II, 331-3.

timbré so that in August, 1674 Colbert restored the tax on stamped paper and removed the other one. Daguesseau was instructed to ensure that the tax was collected and that there were no successful attempts to evade it. The cour des aides of Montpellier had made such an attempt but Daguesseau detected it and received orders to demand payment.¹

There were few times during Daguesseau's intendency when the king did not require extra funds. In 1673, he instructed all intendants to increase revenues by two measures: the first was to seek out all usurers, and the second to tax royal judicial officers and seigneurs.² In 1665 the legal rate of interest was set at five per cent. Anyone exceeding that limit was classed as a usurer. Until this order arrived, the intendants had not been required to supervise the money lenders. Now they were expected to investigate quietly all money lenders, detect the usurers and bring them to trial. Conviction for the crime of usury was punishable by confiscation of all money and most property, a great

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 June, 1679. Clément, II, 103-04.

²Colbert to the intendants, 22 November, 1673. Ibid., 301.

source of revenue, considering the wealth of the usurers. Once brought to trial, the usurer stood no chance of being found not guilty since the intendants were the presiding judges as well as chief prosecutors.

The other matter was, again, a measure designed to obtain funds immediately. All royal judicial officials who were not exempt from the taille, that is, those whose offices did not confer nobility, were to be taxed in return for exemption to the taille. This procured immediate benefits for the king, but in the long run he suffered because the tax never equalled the amount of taille which these officials would have remitted.

In March, 1673, the intendants received an edict ordering all those who were in the arts and in commerce but who were not organized into any guild¹ or similar taxable body to form such communities so that they could be taxed to help the war effort.² The resistance was great but Colbert needed the money and told his intendants so. However, most of the intendants were having great difficulty in forcing the merchants and craftsmen to form communities because the latter were so powerful. Daguesseau was much more successful than the others.

¹For a detailed description of craft organizations see J.U. Nef, Industry and Government in France and England, 1540-1640. Ithica, N.Y.: Great Seal Books, 1957.

²Clément, II, 288, note 1.

Whereas Colbert was entreating his other intendants to try to form these communities,¹ he congratulated Daguesseau on his success and encouraged him to demand more money, especially in cash. The more money he obtained, the better example Languedoc would set for the rest of the country.² The tax proved so difficult to collect that Colbert ordered the intendants to determine the amount each community should pay and then impose it by appropriating the local customs revenues. If that method failed, then a capitation³ would be imposed.⁴

These extra impositions put a terrible strain on the finances of Languedoc. Furthermore, the amount of the don was rising steadily; in 1674 it was 2,000,000 livres and in 1677, it reached 3,000,000 livres. As the Cardinal of Bonsy reported, the province was in such poor fiscal straits that the collectors of the previous year's don were jamming the jails because they were so

¹Colbert to the intendant of Limoges, 12 February, 1674. Clément, II, 324-25, note 2.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, February, 1674. Ibid.

³A capitation was a tax imposed in the same manner as a poll tax, at so much per person in the area.

⁴Colbert to the intendants, 12 September, 1674. Clément, II, 350.

behind in tax gathering.¹

The king's demands did not abate, however, and the intendants were forced to permit particularly harsh methods of taille collection. Colbert attempted to put a halt to these measures by ordering the intendants to forbid the seizure of the means of subsistence for failure to pay debts to the king² but this order was nearly impossible to obey. If the collectors failed to produce the stipulated amounts, then they were sent to jail; therefore, most of them were willing to risk detection by the intendant.

In the same year, Daguesseau was informed that the ferme of the équivalent³ was producing diminished revenues. Colbert asserted that this was obviously the result of abuses in its collection and ordered Daguesseau to seek out and correct the abuses.⁴ Considering the poverty of the province and the demands made upon it, one is tempted to assert that the diminution of revenues from this source might have derived as easily from the inability of most people to purchase the goods on which the équivalent was

¹Bonsy to Colbert, 8 December, 1676. Depping, I, 308.

²Colbert to the intendants, 6 January, 1679. Clément, II, 88.

³The équivalent, usually imposed on fresh and salt meat, fish and wine, was a tax established in Languedoc to take the place of the aides which were imposed in the rest of the kingdom. (Marion, 213)

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 6 January, 1679. Clément, II, 89.

assessed as from the abuses in its collection.¹

In order to determine more clearly the extent of the abuses in collection and to ascertain for himself the burden of taxation which Languedoc could bear, Colbert ordered Daguesseau to file a report on the general conditions of all dioceses in his généralités. He was to detail the taxes, debts, economic livelihood of each diocese as well as the taxes upon all land and the outlook for the year's crop.²

During his investigations, Daguesseau discovered some collusion between the chambre des comptes³ of Montpellier and the accountants of Languedoc. The accountants, who were responsible for many of the taxes owed to the king, were in arrears and Daguesseau prodded them to pay, whereupon they complained that the chambre des comptes ought to pay since it had attached one-quarter of all the revenues. Furthermore, the auditors had been forbidden to mention the matter to anyone and had been forced to erase that sum

¹Le Roy Ladurie describes the period 1660-1740 as a century of atonie, that is, debility. The beginning of the "Grande Depression" is found in the years immediately after 1655. The price of cereals began a steady decline and did not recover during the seventeenth century. See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Histoire du Languedoc. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962, 76-77.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 3 March, 1679. Clément, IV, 127.

³The chambre (or cour) des comptes was the court which treated all matters concerning finances of the royal domain, including verification of the books brought forth by the auditors. (Marion, 81-82)

from the books. Colbert was furious, of course, and finally fined the chambre 60,000 livres.¹ In the event of non-payment, Daguesseau was ordered to force the councillors of that court to discharge the debt.²

A year before Daguesseau was ordered to make a general inventory of the financial assets of each diocese (1679) he was given the task of beginning the papier terrier. Essentially this was an inventory of all the king's lands and rights in the royal domain. The papier was rendered necessary by successive decades of alienation of royal rights, both by design of the monarchs and by encroachment on the part of his subjects. The king no longer had any notion of his domain's extent nor of the rights he had on it. Thus, the inventory would increase royal revenues by depriving poachers of free graze, timber, hunting and land. In addition, the papier terrier would outline clearly the dues owed to Louis by his subjects. In January, Colbert congratulated Daguesseau on being nearly finished the papier terrier for Languedoc.³ Three years later, the task was not quite complete;⁴ nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Daguesseau devoted much time to this endeavour.

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 9 May, 1681. Clément, II, 151-52.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 11 June, 1681. Ibid., 152, note.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 6 January, 1679. Ibid., 90.

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 May, 1682. Ibid., 187.

A problem common to all intendants of pays d'états was the violent opposition amongst the population to the enormous sums voted by the Estates to support the king's various wars. Consequently, Colbert wrote to the intendants instructing them to examine the extent of debts incurred by the Estates for one reason or another. In addition, they were to investigate secretly all the impositions upon the general populace including the taille, the gabelle, the various impositions levied by the Estates in order to pay its debts, and the fermes of the king. Any abuses were to be reported and eliminated and suggestions for easing the people's burden would be gratefully accepted. This letter is really an apology for the devastation wrought by the king's glorious wars.¹

Daguesseau was involved in still another method of increasing royal revenues. In the communities located in the king's domain, the local police had been collecting the money for fines, remitting none of it to the king. Since all justice in the royal domain was the king's responsibility, he ought to have received all of the revenues from fines assessed in domain communities. However, many towns in Languedoc had been granted a share of the police duties and were, therefore, receiving legally a share of the profits. Daguesseau was instructed to determine whether the

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, Morant, and Bouchu, 2 January, 1682. Clément, II, 172.

towns which claimed the right to retain such revenue actually had obtained such a concession from the king.¹

Colbert relied heavily upon Daguesseau, as he had done upon Bezons and Pellot, to facilitate the collection of revenues owed to the king. In the Estates, the intendant was called upon to determine the amount which the Estates could afford to grant and to smooth the path for the vote. In matters of finance not connected with the Estates, Daguesseau was active in ferretting out abuses in the tax system and methods of improving collection techniques and procedures to ease the province's burden while at the same time procuring the sums desired by the king. The papier terrier was extremely important as was the general survey of Languedoc's resources which Daguesseau drew up in 1679. Constant vigilance on his part prevented the successful tax evasion of the cour des aides of Montpellier and the peculation of the chambres des comptes. Daguesseau devoted much time to all of these matters and achieved considerable success.

Commerce and Industry

From the beginning of his intendancy, Daguesseau was involved in the problem of mercantilistic protection of trade, particularly with regard to wheat shipping.²

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 13 May, 1682. Depping, III, 203-04.

²P. Boissonnade gives a detailed description of the grain industry in "Production et commerce des céréales, vins, etc., en Languedoc pendant la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle", Annales du Midi, 1905, 329-360.

The Cardinal of Bonsy appealed to Colbert to allow the wheat of Languedoc, which was choking its storehouses, to be shipped to Provence and suggested that the opinion of Daguesseau be solicited.¹ To add weight to his argument, Bonsy repeated the fears of the merchants that the cessation of trade with Spain would cripple commerce.² If commerce in that direction were cut off as well as trade with Provence, the province would be so poor that the don would be difficult to collect.³

Complaints such as these were common throughout Daguesseau's intendancy, but usually the bone of contention was whether the merchants ought to be permitted to ship wheat abroad. Colbert refused to allow passage of wheat out of the province until May, 1678, when, probably on the advice of Daguesseau, he published an arrêt permitting the export of wheat and all other grains from Languedoc.⁴ Daguesseau, given explicit control over the enforcement of the edict, put it into effect immediately.

However, the export permit was not intended to be a permanent laissez-faire edict, and by February, 1679,

¹Bonsy to Colbert, 25 November, 1673. Depping, I, 297.

²The Dutch War began in 1672 with the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, hence the cessation of trade.

³Bonsy to Colbert, 9 December, 1673. Depping, I, 299.

⁴Arrêt of the council of state of the king, 14 May, 1678. Clément, II, 853.

Daguesseau had to request export passports for some individuals who wished to ship wheat out of the country. Colbert's reply to the request granted the passports but it did even more. Colbert told Daguesseau that it would have been preferable to allow free passage rather than to institute the passport system which only brought about illicit traffic in those permits; therefore, in future, Daguesseau was to use his discretion when explicit orders were lacking.¹

Expressing considerable unease, Colbert ordered Daguesseau to ascertain the conditions of the crops of 1679.² The reply gave him hope but he stated that the king did not wish to remove the ban on exportation of wheat because he did not feel that a king ought to be so equivocal on an issue as important as this one. Colbert obviously did not agree with the king but did not dare to say so; therefore, he took great pains to advise the intendant that this was the king's decision, the implication being that it did not coincide with Colbert's own attitude.³

Daguesseau was to enforce the ban but Colbert pointed out that it pertained only to shipping to foreign countries, not to other parts of France. This made it possible to ship wheat from Narbonne or any other maritime city by declaring that the wheat was destined for somewhere in France when its market was actually in Spain.

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 February, 1679. Clément, VII, 295.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 5 May, 1679. Ibid., IV, 273, note 2.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 June, 1679. Ibid., 273.

In late June, 1679 Colbert informed Daguesseau that much of the wheat shipped from Languedocien cities was being marketed in other countries and ordered him to supervise this facet of commerce more closely.¹

In July, Colbert instructed the intendant to see that the large quantities of wheat being shipped out of Languedoc were going to Provence. Once the harvest was completed, it would be possible to determine whether the surplus was large enough to justify allowing free passage of wheat to foreign countries.² On 2 August, the decision was taken to permit free passage to foreign ports;³ however, disquieting reports on the harvest in Provence prompted Colbert to command Daguesseau to delay publication of the edict until the Provençal harvest could be evaluated accurately.⁴

And so it went every year, the wavering Colbert responding like a weather vane to every new breeze of rumor. In 1680 Colbert rejected the request of the Estates to remove the restrictions on the grounds that it was unreasonable in the light of the shortage of grain in the Dauphiné, Burgundy and Provence. He ordered Daguesseau

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 21 June, 1679. Clément, IV, 273, note 3.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 26 July, 1679. Ibid., 274-75.

³Colbert to the intendant of Aix, 2 August, 1679. Ibid., 275, note 4.

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 10 August, 1679. Ibid.

to report on crop conditions and give his advice about restrictions.¹ In June of the same year, he permitted the free export of wheat because of the anticipated large harvest.² Two months later, Colbert bemoaned the poor Languedocien harvest and ordered Daguesseau to forbid export of wheat from the province.³ At no time during Daguesseau's tenure of office in Languedoc did Colbert cease to evince an interest in crop conditions.⁴

Daguesseau was the instrument for many of Colbert's schemes to improve the commerce of Languedoc, the least admirable of which was the destruction of the bridge at Avignon. This act was intended to reduce Avignon's trade and benefit that of the surrounding French territory.⁵ A more worthwhile enterprise was the attempt of Daguesseau to reduce the number of tolls which burdened traffic on the Rhône. Daguesseau inspected the patents of anyone who claimed the right to assess tolls along the river; those found wanting were forbidden to continue their harassment

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 1 February, 1680. Clément, IV, 278.

²Colbert to the intendants, 13 June, 1680. Ibid., 279.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 1 August, 1680. Ibid., 280, note.

⁴See also Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, II, 502-523.

⁵Colbert to Daguesseau, 24 November, 1674. Clément, IV, 462.

of water traffic. A second goal of this investigation was to obtain detailed knowledge of all tolls charged on the river. Colbert intended to eradicate the entire system of petty tolls, which served as an impediment to commerce, and to substitute for it one composite toll which would be collected at certain points, thereby bothering shipping only once.¹

As a good mercantilist, Colbert had a horror of specie leaving the country. For this reason, the contrôleur général regarded the merchants of Marseille with little favour because, in their transactions in the Levant, the Marseillais nearly always used specie since the quality of French goods was so inferior that there was a lack of markets in the Levant. After repeated warnings to the merchants to trade partly in goods, partly in specie, Colbert ordered Daguesseau to seize some of the money which they insisted on sending to the Levant in exchange for goods.² This action was intended to frighten the merchants into trading French goods for those procured in the Levant, but it was of doubtful value since there was no market for French products.

The whole subject of French cloth manufacture re-

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 22 August, 1680. Clément, II, 139.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 28 January, 1672. Depping, III, 519.

ceived considerable attention from Colbert. His interest in the cloth industry during the intendency of Bezons already has been demonstrated; if anything, this interest increased with time. In 1683 he learned that a Spanish entrepreneur had entered Languedoc to bribe tradesmen and workers in the taffeta and silk stocking industries away from the province to work at their trades in Spain. Daguesseau was to arrest the man and punish him severely, in spite of the fact that there were no ordinances which forbade such activity.¹

The cloth manufacturers in Sète and Clermont were experiencing considerable difficulty and were in danger of declaring an end to their businesses.² Colbert had often assisted these companies, but the owners could not make them function. Colbert instructed Daguesseau to dispel any hopes which the entrepreneurs may have entertained about further contributions to their cause on the part of the king.³ It was regrettable that the companies were on

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 27 May, 1683. Clément, II, 746.

²For detail on the industry and commerce of Languedoc, see O. Granat, "L'industrie de la draperie à Castres au dix-septième siècle", Annales du Midi, 1899, 56-67; P. Boissonnade, "Colbert, son système et les entreprises industrielles d'Etat en Languedoc (1661-1683)", Annales du Midi, 1902, 5-49; "La restauration et le développement de l'industrie en Languedoc au temps de Colbert", Annales du Midi, 1906, 441-472; and "L'Etat, l'organisation et la crise de l'industrie languedocienne", Annales du Midi, 1909, 169-197.

³This was unfair of Colbert because only three weeks before he had instructed Daguesseau to inform these manufacturers that in case of need, they could fall back on the king for assistance. (Colbert to Daguesseau, 11 April, 1681. Clément, II, 718, note 2.)

the verge of disintegration, but the king would not avert the catastrophe. Nevertheless, Daguesseau was to assist in any other way to keep the industries alive. The intendant had already suggested a merger between the two companies as a means of pooling resources. Colbert pointed out that sending a non-swimmer to save a drowning man had very little merit.¹

Daguesseau approached the Estates for money to save the company in Clermont and obtained 8,000 livres. Colbert approved of this action as a stop-gap measure but instructed Daguesseau to seek a permanent solution. It was particularly important that he perform this task with extreme diligence because the king and Colbert would form a decision based almost entirely on the recommendations received from the intendant. They had already rejected Daguesseau's original suggestion that the existing companies be abandoned and the Estates be forced to buy the buildings which they would turn over to an entrepreneur who could guarantee the results. Colbert had found this recommendation too expensive.

Colbert had a few suggestions of his own to offer on the subject of the Clermont and Sète industries. He recommended that the entrepreneurs in Saptès and Carcassonne, who were engaged in producing fine cloths, be induced to purchase the looms used in the Clermont factories.

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 8 May, 1681. Clément, II, 718.

Those engaged in the manufacture of the coarser cloths might be prevailed upon to purchase the looms at Sète. In that fashion, the province would not lose any productive capacity since the companies of Carcassone and Saptès were solvent and growing. If, however, the province decided to support the sagging companies, then Colbert warned the intendant to expect insolvency within two years.¹

Daguesseau recommended that the Clermont looms be sold to the manufacturers at Saptès who would require some financial assistance from the Estates.² Colbert had decided to place most of his hopes in the factory at Saptès, encouraging it by employing all of his considerable influence to augment the trade of the cloth in the Levant and in Paris. He also ordered Daguesseau to stimulate the manufacturers to produce cloth which could be marketed in Spain and Italy.³

Colbert summed up his position on this issue by stating that his only interest was to maintain the cloth industry for the general benefit of the province. He had no interest whatsoever in maintaining the old company, unless it could offer assurances that it would increase the manufacture of cloth without again declaring bankruptcy. Since the old company obviously could not offer

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 6 February, 1682. Clément, II, 729-30.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 26 March, 1682. Ibid., 732-33.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 24 June, 1682. Ibid., 734-5.

such assurances, Colbert preferred to establish a new one. Therefore, the Estates were required to grant 100,000 livres to a new company with which it would hire workers and tradesmen, buy the necessary utensils, and pay the rent until the new company began to show a profit.¹

By December, 1682, several entrepreneurs had expressed a desire to assume the position of cloth manufacturers; however, a whole company had to be formed and subscriptions taken. This, of course, was the task of the intendant. The Estates had been reluctant to vote the money to assist the formation of the new company, but Daguesseau had overcome the resistance. Until the new company was prepared to begin operations, the Estates were also required to vote 4,000 livres per month to sustain the factories.² Daguesseau's task was to ensure that the Estates continued to vote the money without attempting to obstruct the new developments.³

C.W. Cole assesses the success of Colbert's attempts to foster a cloth industry in Languedoc: Although the industry was in a shaky position by the death of Colbert, it soon took root and developed into the major means of live-

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 26 August, 1682. Clément, VII, 296.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 9 December, 1682. Ibid., II, 741.

³A much more thorough treatment of this and other facets of the cloth industry in Languedoc is to be found in Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, II, 156-171.

lihood of a great many Languedocien families.¹ A great part of the credit must go to Daguesseau.

Colbert's interest in the cloth industry was not restricted to manufacturing and marketing. In 1682, the merchants of Carcassonne sold 135,000 sheep to the Spanish. Colbert, horrified by this sale because he wished to increase the number of animals in the kingdom, demanded an explanation of Daguesseau who had authorized the sale. The latter justified himself in mercantilistic terms: the sale had brought specie into the kingdom, and since the trade in sheep was regulated by the intendant, he could always put a stop to it if he noticed that the sheep population was becoming depleted.²

The cloth industry was of tremendous importance to Languedoc, but the canal du Languedoc was scarcely less so. By 1682 the construction had been completed and opened to traffic. This opened up a whole new area of grievances and problems for Daguesseau. The heir of Riquet de Bonrepos (the engineer had died in 1680) was claiming the right to establish tolls on the canal, and the right to maintain the sole fleet of transport vehicles on the canal. As seigneur of the canal, Riquet's heir was responsible for its upkeep; therefore, he requested these privileges.³

¹Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, II, 170.

²Daguesseau to Colbert, 28 March, 1682. Clément, IV, xlix.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 5 October, 1682. Depping, III, 204-06.

The first was granted but Daguesseau was instructed to see that the revenues from the tolls served the purpose for which they were established. Colbert refused the second request because command of the only fleet of barges on the river would be too extensive a privilege and would probably result in rates so high that the purpose of the canal would be defeated.¹ In general, Colbert ordered Daguesseau to prevent the imposition of any tariffs not based on a written statement of permission from the king.²

On the basis of the figures sent to him by the intendant, Colbert was reasonably pleased with the volume of traffic on the canal, but he wished to know the exact nature of the traffic, particularly whether foreign goods were being shipped across France. Accordingly, Daguesseau was instructed to draw up a cahier on the volume of foreign goods being shipped on the canal.³

Two months later, presumably after receiving the cahier from Daguesseau, Colbert expressed great disappointment about the lack of foreign goods shipped on the canal. Since it was only the beginning, he had reason to be hopeful, he stated, especially if the intendant did his duty by making sure that the canal was kept in good repair.⁴

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 29 October, 1682. Depping, III, 206-07.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 5 October, 1682. Ibid., 206.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 27 May, 1683. Clément, II, 746.

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 July, 1683. Depping, III, 519-20.

His desires to increase the foreign shipping on the canal never bore fruit; however, the canal became a major artery for local traffic and gave a considerable boost to commerce throughout the Midi.¹

Obeying the mercantilistic guidelines set down by Colbert, Daguesseau had assisted in determining whether wheat could be shipped out of France within the framework of mercantilism. He had checked the amount of specie which the merchants of Marseilles were shipping to the Levant, and he had assisted in the development of a cloth industry which Colbert hoped would enable France to engage in trade without exporting large quantities of specie. Other equally important matters were the removal of illegal and unnecessary tolls on the Rhône and supervision of the canal du Languedoc so that it was maintained properly and that illegal tolls were not collected. Fortunately for Colbert and Languedoc, Daguesseau proved equal to the tasks assigned him.

¹Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, I, 381-83.

CHAPTER VII

DAGUESSEAU AND OTHER PROVINCIAL MATTERS

Public Works

In the field of public works, Daguesseau carried on the work begun during the intendancy of Bezons and began new developments of the same nature. In 1673, Colbert addressed a pessimistic *mémoire* to the king, in which he expressed doubt of the possibility of keeping the sand out of the port of Sète and out of the grau leading to the sea.¹ Ten years later, shortly before his death in 1683, Colbert again ordered Daguesseau to see that the sand was removed from the port so that it could receive the vessels travelling on the canal du Languedoc.² In the intervening years, Colbert wrote often on this subject as well as on the construction of the rest of the canal, nor was Daguesseau remiss in keeping Colbert abreast of all developments in the canal.³ As a means of

¹Mémoire on the port of Sète, 8 December, 1673. Clément, III, 511.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 27 May, 1683. Ibid., II, 746.

³Daguesseau to Colbert, 5 October, 1680. Ibid., IV, 598; and Daguesseau to Colbert, 19 October, 1680. Ibid., 591.

providing inducement for greater efforts, Colbert assured Daguesseau, in 1679, that the king would journey through the area primarily to see the canal. However, the intendant was instructed not to allow hasty construction simply to meet the deadline for the king's visit.¹ The king did not make the trip, and the canal was not completed until 1682. It had taken years of effort and even then no permanent solution appears to have been found to the problem of the silting up of the port at the end of the canal.

Daguesseau was involved in the same sort of projects as Bezons had been. In 1674 he was given control of the development of the grau of Narbonne² and much later in the reign was put in charge of land reclamation in Languedoc. In 1679 Colbert recommended that, since peace had descended on the realm, the time was ripe to find a good engineer and explore the marshes which could be drained and then cultivated.³ In the field of public works, therefore, both Bezons and Daguesseau enjoyed considerable influence. Bezons launched the construction of the canal du Languedoc and various ports and graux in the

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 3 February, 1679. Depping, IV, 64.

²Cardinal of Bonsy to Colbert, 21 October, 1674. Ibid., 73.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 26 July, 1679. Clément, IV, 275.

province; Daguesseau was involved in the same sorts of affairs, but fewer projects were undertaken during his intendancy, probably because of the wars which drained the province's resources.

Municipal Affairs

In the municipal affairs of Languedoc Daguesseau had an advantage because Bezons had broken most of the opposition which Daguesseau otherwise would have had to face. The commissions for the verification and liquidation of municipal debts are good examples. The Estates had opposed these commissions on the grounds that they were too costly, but Bezons had overcome this resistance so that the commissions had already made a good beginning before Daguesseau arrived in Languedoc.

One must not assume, however, that the task of Daguesseau entailed no challenges. In 1679 Daguesseau was worried not only about the verification and liquidation of debts, but also about how to prevent communities from incurring new ones. He sent a proposal to Colbert which the latter examined¹ and which probably had an effect on the ordinance of 1680 concerning the financial responsibility of each community.

Many intendants had appealed for Colbert's help in dealing with municipal indebtedness. In 1662 Bezons

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 3 March, 1679. Clément, IV, 127.

had begun the task of liquidating communal debts in Languedoc; in 1669 Pellot had recommended that the communities of Guyenne be forbidden to incur additional debts without the permission of the intendants. By 1680 new difficulties were encountered, for those communities whose debts had been verified and reduced were using their improved credit to undertake new and more crippling obligations, thus rendering useless the previous two decades' efforts.

On 29 February, 1680 the independence of most municipalities was removed by the ordinance which forbade them to contract new debts without the express permission of the intendant. Furthermore, there were only certain exigencies for which borrowing would be permitted, such as famine, raising money for war, and repairing burned churches.¹ The ordinance was not always effective as is illustrated by the Languedocien communities which attempted to borrow money from the Estates. Daguesseau prevented this by exercising the powers given to all intendants by the ordinance.² In this case he feared two developments--the communities would incur new debts and the Estates would increase their powers in the province by becoming the creditors of impecunious communities which could not possibly repay the money.

¹Colbert to the intendants, 29 February, 1680. Clément, IV, 138.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 26 December, 1680. Ibid., 138, note.

In order to liquidate the debts, special taxes had to be imposed in each community, the revenue going to the mayor or town council who would reimburse the community's creditors. However, corruption was so extensive that even this scheme could not function without very strict supervision. Colbert had learned that the receipts of the special taxes were being diverted to other projects which increased the municipalities' obligations. He ordered the intendants to investigate the matter more thoroughly and to cancel collection of the taxes until the situation was rectified.¹ The only solution which Colbert could devise was to instruct the intendants to supervise personally the implementation of the edicts designed to liquidate debts. Daguesseau received orders of this nature when the debts of Baziers were due to be settled.²

Although the liquidation of debts was Daguesseau's principal activity in the municipal affairs of Languedoc, it was by no means the only one. Colbert ordered him to research the matter of peasants' grazing rights on royal domain. The papier terrier would eventually incorporate this knowledge, but it was important that an interim solution be found because the officials in charge of royal forests were charging the peasants

¹Colbert to the intendants, 6 March, 1683. Clément, IV, 172.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 July, 1683. Depping, III, 520.

exorbitant rates. Colbert always believed that impositions on the people should benefit either the king or the community, not particular individuals; therefore, he wished to prevent undue harassment of the peasants. On the other hand, he also hoped to prevent devastation of royal domain by over-use. Daguesseau's task was to ascertain the fair price for grazing rights and the number of animals which the land would support.¹

A substantial interest in the welfare of the province prompted Daguesseau to undertake the planning of a hôpital général² in Mende. He asked Colbert for permission to finance the project by a general tax on wine sold in the area. The king forbade such a tax stating that the hôpitaux were supposed to be works of charity; therefore, they were not public works for which taxes could be imposed by the king. However, the king gave Daguesseau authority to allow the assembly of the community to impose a tax on itself or on each family in the city.³

Daguesseau devoted much time to the problem of municipal debts. In addition, he was expected to solve

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 4 July, 1680. Clément, IV, 280.

²A hôpital général was an institution, built by church charity, in which were housed beggars and others who had no means of subsistence. In many of them the poor received training in trades.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 2 January, 1679. Depping, I, 876.

minor issues as they developed, but little evidence detailing such activity on his part is available, whereas the involvement of Bezons and Pellot is adequately authenticated, particularly with regard to the election of municipal officers. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the three intendants served the same basic purpose in the realm of municipal affairs.

Justice

In 1679, Colbert decided to attempt a clarification of the jurisprudence concerning the taille réelle.¹ In the areas of Southwest France where the tax was assessed--Languedoc, Guyenne and Provence--the laws varied greatly due to the fact that the cours des aides of these areas could, and did, determine the laws by reaching decisions which set precedents. Daguesseau suggested that an attempt be made to rationalize the legislation concerning this tax. Colbert heartily approved, ordering him to conduct discussions with Foucault, the intendant of Montauban; and Ris, the intendant of Bordeaux.²

Since Daguesseau needed assistance from residents of Languedoc who were conversant with the legal aspects

¹The taille réelle was assessed on land and buildings rather than on a person. This meant that land owned by nobles could be taxed if the land were not ennobled.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 11 May, 1679. Clément, II, 99.

of this financial matter, he suggested that Colbert authorize the cour des aides to counsel him. The request was only partially granted; Colbert chose five men from that tribunal who he felt would act in the best interests of the king rather than of the cour des aides.¹

In June, 1680 Daguesseau, Ris and Foucault met for the first time to discuss the matter.² That meeting merely established the guidelines to be followed by all three intendants in the succeeding year. The discussions of 1681 were the most important ones in Colbert's eyes. He instructed Daguesseau to take as long as necessary to reach some decision on the issue.³ In January, 1681 a larger gathering met in Montpellier, in Daguesseau's home, and hammered out several definite proposals. These were sent to Colbert and, according to Foucault, were rejected in their entirety,⁴ but a letter from Colbert indicates that the intendant exaggerated.⁵

Colbert had concluded that for political reasons few changes could be made in the existing regulations concerning the taille réelle. He did not reject the entire

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 June, 1679. Clément, II, 104.

²F. Baudry, ed., Mémoires de Nicolas-Joseph Foucault. Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1862, 76.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 October, 1680. Clément, II, 142.

⁴F. Baudry, ed., Mémoires de Nicolas Foucault, 77.

⁵Ibid., 466.

recommendation of the intendants, but he could not approve the spirit of the recommendations. Because both Daguesseau and Foucault had relied heavily on councillors from the cours des aides to advise them in drafting the new regulations, most of the proposed changes would have favoured particularist interests, especially those of the cours des aides. In an era of greater centralization of powers, Daguesseau and the others had drafted a proposal which directly contradicted this trend, and for this reason Colbert was compelled to reject most of the reorganization called for in the study. He wanted greater simplification, not more juridical confusion, and above all, he opposed augmenting the authority of the cours des aides of Southern France.¹

In succeeding letters, Colbert expressed even greater dissatisfaction with the proposals, and finally he notified Daguesseau that the whole matter would be dropped.²

One of the smaller issues to which Colbert directed Daguesseau's attention was the tobacco tax. The tax was failing to produce the anticipated revenues; therefore, all intendants were instructed to investigate the methods of collection and, more important, the course of justice in

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 1 July, 1682. Clément, II, 196.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 19 August, 1682. Ibid., 197, note.

disputes arising from the tax. If the regular judicial agencies were performing their task satisfactorily, then no action would be necessary; however, if they proved dishonest or incompetent, then the intendants were to assume all jurisdiction in the matter.¹

Daguesseau had filed a report on the judicial aspects of this tax. He considered the situation satisfactory except for the subdelegates whom the cour des aides of Montpellier had appointed to try such matters. Colbert was amazed that Daguesseau treated this pernicious development so lightly. The cour des aides had taken upon itself the right to appoint tribunals, which Colbert found most unacceptable. The intendant was instructed to investigate the matter and file a recommendation on the best method of preventing further such actions.² Furthermore, Colbert wished to permit no changes in the taxes on tobacco, and for that reason he rejected a mémoire, drawn up by Daguesseau, which recommended several improvements.³

Other minor judicial duties also claimed Daguesseau's attention. For a brief time in 1682 the intendants

¹Colbert to the intendants, 9 January, 1679. Clément, II, 91.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 16 March, 1679. Ibid., 94-5.

³Nor did he wish to give any assistance to domestic producers of tobacco. He frankly admitted that he and the king were attempting to destroy the domestic production because it was ruining the economy of the colonies. Ibid., 95.

were given total authority to try cases of dispute over the droits domaniaux and the ferme des domaines, both being taxes restricted to the king's own domain lands. This was a stop-gap measure designed to fill the void until a new judicial system could be developed.¹

In summary, the intendant was involved in the legal aspects of nearly every tax imposed in Languedoc. However, this was by no means the full extent of his judicial activities. Daguesseau participated in all forms of justice, criminal and civil, generally in a supervisory capacity.

Without specific instructions, the intendant did not have the authority to usurp the functions of the normal channels of justice and police. This fact is amply borne out by many cases such as the following. Daguesseau proposed to have the prévôts arrest several criminals in the province, some of whom were gypsies. He received permission to arrest the gypsies because an ordinance of September, 1666 had given the intendants authority over them. However, he was forbidden to give orders to the prévôts concerning criminals who were not gypsies since that would impinge on the regular channels of justice and police. Instead, he was instructed to urge the regular judges to prosecute.²

¹Colbert to the intendants, 26 March, 1682. Clément, II, 179.

²Marquis of Seignelay to Daguesseau, 10 December, 1679. Ibid., IV, 141.

Daguesseau devoted much time to investigating trials in order to be certain that all cases were being heard in the proper courts. He reported that in both Limoux and Montpellier, several cases had been considered by unauthorized judges. The king's decision vindicated Montpellier and castigated Limoux; nevertheless, the chancellor, Letellier, who transmitted Louis XIV's answer to the intendant, mentioned the particular satisfaction of the king with regard to Daguesseau's efforts in judicial affairs.¹

In extraordinary cases, Daguesseau was empowered to prosecute criminals such as Trelans and Senegas, the murderers of two Languedociens.² They had escaped capture and were considered important enough to merit the attention of the intendant; therefore, Colbert issued special instructions to give Daguesseau jurisdiction in the case. Usually, however, the intendant devoted himself to inspecting the judicial system to pinpoint weaknesses such as incompetence and dishonesty. His other activities were in the area of tax legislation and legal cases concerning taxation. The praise Daguesseau received from the king about his zeal in matters of justice attests to his effectiveness.

¹Letellier to Daguesseau, 6 August, 1679. Depping, II, 215.

²See F. Baudry, Mémoires de Foucault. 398ff.

Religious Affairs

Louis XIV's search for gloire led him into blunders and atrocities. Perhaps the worst of both was the revocation, in 1685, of the Edict of Nantes which had given his Huguenot subjects some measure of protection against the Catholic majority. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the Huguenots had enjoyed freedom until the Edict was revoked. The withdrawal of the sheltering edict had been presaged by numerous instances of persecution, both official and unofficial.¹

Daguesseau was one of the most important of Louis' agents in carrying out the persecution which eventually led to the departure of the Huguenots and the revocation of the Edict. In early 1679 Daguesseau sent to Colbert several proposals for depriving the Huguenots of their means of existence.² Some of his suggestions were rela-

¹A recent work on the effects of the revocation is Warren C. Scoville's The Persecution of Huguenots and French Economic Development 1680-1720, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960. Scoville examined the statistics available to ascertain whether the flight of the R.P.R. had the drastic effects on the French Economy which it was reputed to have had. His conclusion was that many French industries suffered temporary losses of productive capacity but that the losses were as much the product of the great depression and the wars of Louis XIV as they were of the departure of the Huguenots.

See also Ruth Kleinman, "The Unquiet Truce: An Exploration of Catholic Feeling against the Huguenots in France, 1646-1664," French Historical Studies, IV, no. 2, Fall, 1965, 170-189.

²P. Gachon, Quelques préliminaires de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes en Languedoc (1661-1685), Toulouse: Edouard Privat, 1899, LXXIX-LXXXVIII in the pièces justificatives.

tively gentle; for example, he recommended that the Catholic priests take a lesson from the Huguenots and spend more time teaching the parishioners; he also recommended that the ministers be bribed. By contrast, he recommended several means of preventing the ministers from collecting dues, suggested that legal cases involving Huguenots be drawn out so as to render them expensive, and advanced other means of harassment. Many of his recommendations were implemented before the revocation of the Edict.

Daguesseau regarded the Huguenots in much the same fashion as Pellot regarded the Bayonnais, that is, he felt that the king ought to rule them as he ruled the rest of his subjects. It is important to note that Daguesseau drafted his conversion proposals without any solicitation from Colbert or anyone else. Colbert and Louis investigated these and other mémoires and sent orders to the intendant to further the persecution begun in earlier decades. In 1679 Colbert announced to Daguesseau that an arrêt would soon arrive which would enable him to convoke a meeting of all the procureurs of the R.P.R. (religion prétendue réformée) who were serving in the cour des comptes, aides and finances of Montpellier. He would inform them that henceforth no royal officer engaged in matters of finance would be permitted to retain his position if he failed to convert to Catholicism.¹ In addition he was to prohibit

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 13 March, 1679. Clément, II, 95.

the Huguenot fermiers of the équivalent (a tax particular to Languedoc) from exercising their functions until they converted.¹

Further orders were received forbidding the employment of Huguenots by the receveurs généraux in the collection of taxes.² Many other similar orders emanated from Paris but they were not entirely effective. In 1682 Daguesseau reported that the instructions were impossible to follow because the Huguenots were still able to farm taxes by employing Catholics to act as "front men", thereby retaining their former positions relative to the taille and all other taxes. The intendant reported that everyone knew of the deception, but that he had done nothing about the matter because a thorough enquiry could jeopardize the financial position of the king in Languedoc. He asked for instructions.³ Colbert quickly replied that no Huguenot was to be permitted to be involved in the collection of the taille; he stressed that the order was to be obeyed strictly.⁴

Even this order did not have the desired effect.

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 6 January, 1679. Clément, II, 90.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 August, 1680. Ibid., note 1.

³W.C. Scoville, The Persecution of the Huguenots and French Economic Development 1680-1720, 47.

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 17 August, 1682. Depping, III, 203-04.

The king learned that, despite the orders, there were still many Huguenots employed in the administration of finance, justice and police. He ordered an immediate and total termination of Huguenot participation in these matters.¹ In fact, Huguenots were not successfully deprived of the right to engage in tax collection until the actual revocation.

The documents are rife with examples of Daguesseau's attempts to bribe various important Huguenots to convert in order to set a good example for the others. Often Colbert was unwilling to spend the money for one convert no matter how important; he feared to set a precedent because everyone else who converted would want the same treatment which the contrôleur général deemed too expensive a means of obtaining converts.²

However, the religious problems of the king were not restricted to the Huguenots; the Catholics were not all totally satisfied with Louis' policies. In 1679 Daguesseau was ordered to obtain secretly information concerning the elections to the assembly of the clergy. The clergy complained that the central government was attempting to usurp its functions and deprive the assembly of clergy of power, by permitting the intendants to inter-

¹Colbert to the intendants, 27 May, 1683. Clément, VI, 195.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 11 May, 1679. Ibid., 160, note 1.

fere in the election of its members and to exert pressure on individuals in the assembly to vote according to the wishes of the king.¹

Difficulties in relations with Rome were not absent in the reign of Louis XIV; consequently, Daguesseau often was forced to investigate the rumors of secret correspondence between inhabitants of Languedoc and the Vatican.² These correspondents were not infrequently accused of complicity in the libel sheets circulating throughout the country.

No religious matter appeared to be too trivial for the intendant. He was called upon to see that the sisters in the convent of the Abbess of Fontrault received their allowances from their relatives³ and to investigate the report that many officers died without receiving sacraments or burial in order that their families retain their offices. Since there was no official death notice, the charge would not revert to the king.⁴

¹Colbert to Daguesseau, 18 February, 1679. Clément, IV, 127.

²Colbert to Daguesseau, 12 July, 1682. Depping, IV, 146.

³Colbert to Daguesseau, 4 February, 1683. Clément, VI, 190.

⁴Colbert to Daguesseau, 7 November, 1682. Ibid., 183.

Daguesseau was, therefore, much more involved in affairs of religion than either Bezons or Pellot had been. It is possible to read detailed accounts of the history of religious persecution in Languedoc and Guyenne without ever encountering the names of Pellot and Bezons, although they did participate in it to a certain extent, but it is impossible to read such accounts without references to Daguesseau. To his discredit, he was a major figure in the pre-revocation persecution of the Huguenots.

Daguesseau proved himself a good intendant in the eyes of Colbert and the king. He completed many of the projects begun by Bezons, including the construction of the canal du Languedoc and several of the môles and graux in the province. The Estates did not regain the powers lost to the king through Bezons, nor were they able to prevent the vote of large sums for the don gratuit; in fact, the only person who had any effect in reducing the amounts demanded by the king was Daguesseau, who realized the limitations of the province's resources. New taxes were instituted and others reviewed, and he worked diligently to improve the commercial and industrial potential of Languedoc. With the exception of the persecution of the Huguenots, Daguesseau's intendancy, like those of Bezons and Pellot, stands as a model administration, given the administrative and social context of seventeenth century provincial affairs.

CONCLUSION

As representatives of the central government, the three intendants discussed in this study exhibited a high degree of competence and effectiveness. Although they were not always faced with the same types of problems and had unequal success in different areas, all three definitely helped to strengthen the grip of Louis XIV on his subjects.

Claude Pellot, intendant of Montauban and Bordeaux, had the most difficult task in many respects. According to the reports of various royal officers, Guyenne was the most factious and least governable province in the realm. The fact that it had no Estates may have aided its resistance to royal authority; the king was deprived of a focal point for his encroachment and had to divide his efforts among the parlement of Bordeaux and the two cours des aides of Bordeaux and Montauban. In carrying out the spirit and the letter of Colbert's instructions, Pellot encountered particularist sentiments throughout the province, not only from the peasants and middle classes, but also from the upper nobility. (It was the upper nobility which prevented Pellot from depriving Bayonne of its autonomous position.) Any evaluation of the success of Pellot's career must take the above matters into considera-

The first section of the journal is devoted to the study of the history of the English language. It contains a number of articles which deal with the development of the language from its earliest forms to the present day. The second section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various dialects and accents. It contains a number of articles which deal with the differences between the various dialects and accents of the English language. The third section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various social contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different social situations.

The fourth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various literary contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different literary genres. The fifth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various educational contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different educational settings. The sixth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various professional contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different professional settings. The seventh section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various cultural contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different cultural settings. The eighth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various historical contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different historical settings. The ninth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various geographical contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different geographical settings. The tenth section is devoted to the study of the English language in its various technological contexts. It contains a number of articles which deal with the use of the English language in different technological settings.

tion.

A further consideration is the cooperation of Colbert and the king. On numerous occasions, Pellot was eager to implement some policy of benefit to the king only to encounter resistance from Paris; the best examples of this are his attempts to subject Béarn to the gabelle and Bayonne to closer direction by the king. Colbert and the king feared the consequences of such large scale activities because of the proximity of a generally hostile Spain.

Within this framework of limitations, Pellot functioned as the king's chief agent. He was given few opportunities to formulate and implement policies without previous scrutiny by Colbert and the king, but his recommendations were often the basis of royal policy in Guyenne.

By contrast Bezons and Daguesseau worked under different handicaps, the greatest being the power of the Estates of Languedoc and of its individual members. Whereas Pellot had constantly to contend with smaller powerful groups, the Languedocien intendants could concentrate on the Estates. Once conquered, they ceased to create major problems. The main levy or taxes (don gratuit) had to be voted in the Estates, and if the king wished to institute a new tax he had first to obtain the approval of the Estates; therefore, this body was a force with which the intendants had to reckon. The numerous very influential bishops who attended the province's Estates often created obstacles which Bezons and Daguesseau had to remove in

order to institute various policies, as did the municipal representatives at the Estates. However, the intendants' tasks were immensely simplified by Colbert's participation in the politics of the province. Since the don was very important to the king, Colbert had to take note of all matters considered in the Estates. Anything which hindered the money votes received careful scrutiny, and the intendants who attempted to obtain the money usually received whole-hearted support from Colbert. Colbert was, of course, involved in nearly everything which occurred in the province, but where his interests and those of the king were at stake he brought to bear all the pressures at the king's disposal. This happened much more frequently in Languedoc than it did in Guyenne, thereby rendering less difficult the tasks of Bezons and Daguesseau.

In the field of finance, Pellot and the other two intendants were concerned with the same goals, that is, to ensure the honest and efficient imposition and collection of the taxes on which Louis XIV depended. Pellot faced little opposition in imposing the taille since he functioned for the most part in pays d'élection, but he did experience overwhelming resistance in attempting to collect it. By contrast, Bezons and Daguesseau spent considerable time in the Estates coercing the members to vote a don gratuit suitable to the king. All three achieved considerable success, although Daguesseau had probably the easiest task since he was not really the

most important figure in the province concerned with the taille. His duty was to ascertain the amount which the province could pay rather than to see that the Estates voted it.

Since Pellot did not have to contend with Estates and Daguesseau encountered little resistance from that quarter, they could devote more time to other financial matters. Pellot collected the taille due from previous years, arrears which had not been taken because of the weakness of royal authority in the more distant provinces and because of the corruption and instability of the administration of Fouquet, the previous superintendent general of finances. Colbert's first orders to Pellot concerned the collection of the arrears, which proved to be a very difficult undertaking. Daguesseau, functioning in a province whose effective resistance had been restricted partially, was involved in several attempts to rationalize the tax structure and collection; the reforms he suggested for the taille réelle and other taxes absorbed much of his time.

In addition to the other financial considerations which Pellot had to treat, the institution of the gabelle consumed two years of his energies because it brought about the Audijos revolt. Even after the worst of the revolt had passed, Pellot struggled to impose the gabelle in Chalosse and in Béarn; in both cases, he was unsuccessful. Nothing comparable occurred during the intendancies

of Bezons and Daguesseau except for the revolt in the Vviarais in 1670 which flared and was extinguished in a relatively short time. That all three intendants were prepared to combat revolts is undoubted; however, only Pellot and Bezons were called upon to do so.

All of the intendants concerned themselves with judicial affairs but in most cases their involvement was indirect and produced few changes. Where abuses abounded, they reported the conditions to Colbert and awaited instructions. In the sovereign courts such as the parlements and the cours des aides they had no authority but, since Colbert wished to reduce the powers of those courts, he gave the intendants special instructions and listened very closely to their advice about the best course to follow. (This was particularly true of Pellot's situation because the lack of Estates in Guyenne had made possible the extension of powers of the parlements and cours des aides.) The non-sovereign courts such as the présidiaux presented problems of a different nature since the intendants had the authority to preside in any of these courts and, hence, could act directly. Abuses were common and diversified which rendered the intendants' tasks almost impossible. Although all three intendants made some progress in reforming judicial processes in these courts, other affairs claimed much of their time and prevented a whole-sale rationalization of the judicial machinery.

Pellot, Bezons and Daguesseau devoted equal time to commerce and industry, although their activities took different directions. Pellot and Daguesseau were concerned with the export of wheat from their généralités, Pellot being among the first to obtain from Colbert permission to export wheat to foreign countries. Whereas this was a relatively minor matter to Pellot, to Daguesseau and the whole province of Languedoc this subject was extremely important since legal obstacles to such exportation deprived the province of much wealth. By the mid-1670's Daguesseau was often permitted to exercise his own discretion about exporting wheat.

Because his généralités included important Atlantic ports, most of the time spent by Pellot on commercial affairs was devoted to the collection of supporters for the various trading companies established by Colbert in the 1660's. Neither Daguesseau nor Bezons was concerned with such matters; instead, they worked assiduously to encourage the development of free enterprise in Languedoc, particularly in the cloth industry. Their success was ensured by the attention given to the subject by Colbert.

The most lasting achievements of all three intendants were in the field of public works. Pellot was instrumental in the construction of locks rendering the Lot navigable and permitting the inland areas in the généralité of Montauban to export their goods more cheaply than had

been the case previously. Bezons initiated the construction of several ports and graux and supervised the commencement of the canal du Languedoc, and later these projects were taken up by Daguesseau and brought to fruition.

Pellot was disappointed in his failure to rid municipalities of the overwhelming debts incurred by dishonest and incompetent officers; nevertheless, many of his recommendations were implemented in Languedoc by Bezons and Daguesseau who achieved qualified success. In this matter the intendants were supported by Colbert who considered municipal debts important because they inhibited the payment of the taille and other royal taxes.

All three intendants were involved in local elections and in attempting to eliminate corruption rampant in municipal affairs. Their ability to do so derived from two ordinances which expanded the powers of the intendants considerably. First, during the intendency of Bezons, the king ordered all communities to present any grievances to the intendant for approval before deputizing to the king. Second, during the intendency of Daguesseau, the king forbade all municipal expenditures without approval from the intendant since even those communities whose debts had been liquidated by the commissions of the previous twenty years once again were incurring debts beyond their capacity.

One can form some conclusions of a general nature

concerning the intendants of Languedoc and Guyenne. The intendants had little power independent of Colbert and the king. However, their authority did increase as the reign progressed and as Colbert learned to trust some of them.

In the early 1660's Colbert did not trust Bezons enough to rely on his accounts of the proceedings of the Estates of Languedoc; therefore, he asked all bishops to report on the Estates' affairs. By 1666, however, he had dispensed with all reports except those of the Archbishop of Toulouse and the commissaires, indicating a greater trust in Bezons and greater confidence in his judgment. That he trusted Bezons is amply demonstrated by the ordinance which forced all communities to clear grievances with the intendant before deputizing to the king.

In the early stages of Pellot's career, the intendant was constrained to inform Colbert of his every action; however, during the last two years of his tenure of office, the lesser volume of correspondence between the two men suggests that Colbert gave him independent authority on issues which were not of vital importance. Pellot continued to function as an intendant in 1668 and 1669, but there is little record of his activities; either he was doing less, or he was no longer required to inform Colbert of his every action. The fact that Pellot was an honest and efficient intendant in a province which needed the supervision of a strong man suggests that Pellot continued

to act but was called upon less frequently to justify his actions.

Daguesseau was the only one of the three intendants whose powers did not increase with Colbert's increasing trust in him, because Colbert trusted him from the beginning. Nevertheless, Daguesseau's powers did grow considerably during his intendency, for the office was being institutionalized and strengthened. One need only refer to the extensive authority given to the intendants in 1680 which established their control over all spending by civic governments.

The period 1661 to 1683 put a permanent stamp upon the royal administration. So far as one can judge from the experience of the South West, Colbert's intendants were honest, capable and ruthless agents whose energies were devoted exclusively to pleasing Colbert and the king. The efforts of these men and Colbert's immense capacity for detailed supervision laid the foundations of a royal administration that was both more diligent and more controllable than any earlier French administrative structures.

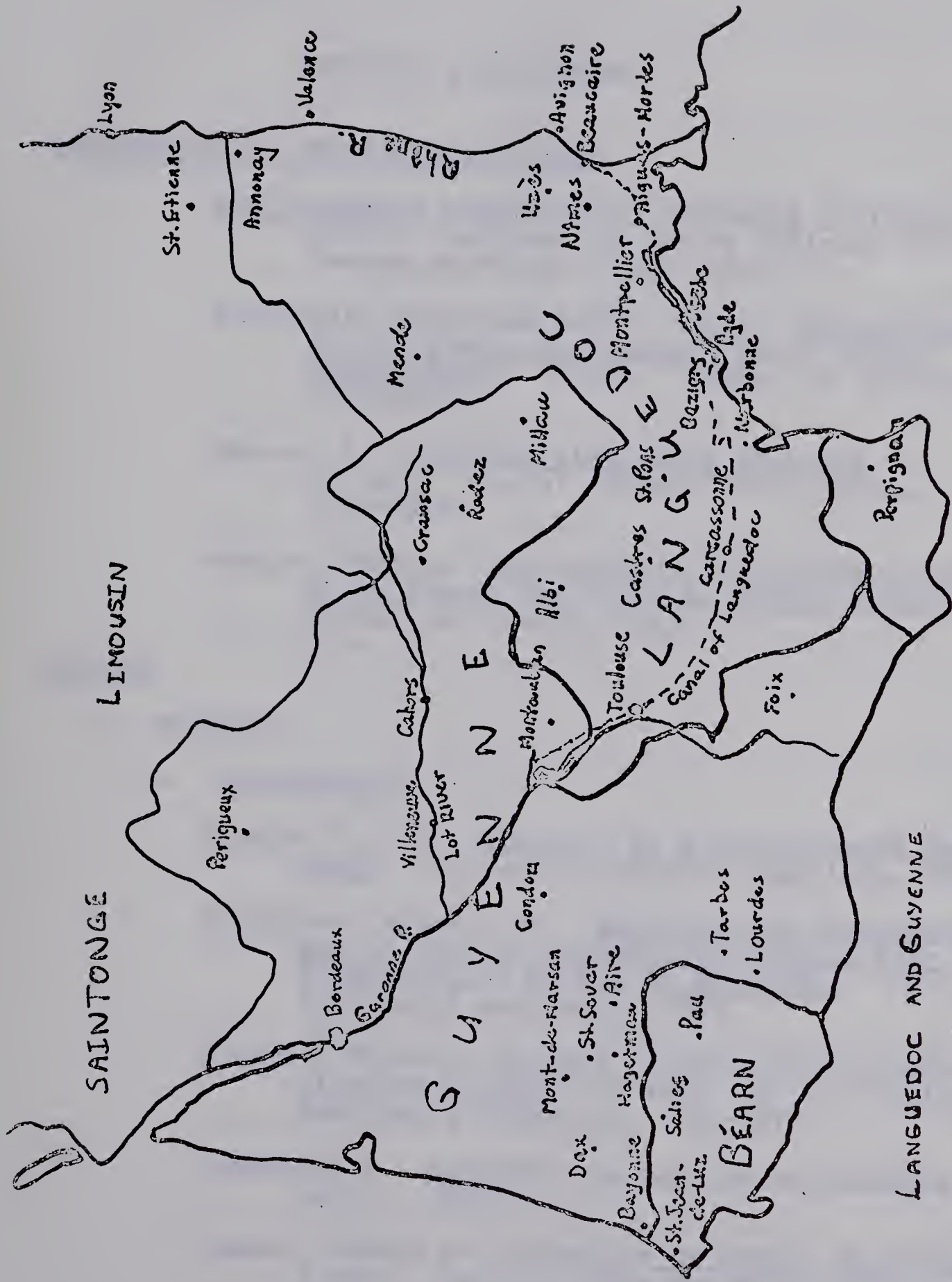
One other conclusion remains to be drawn. That the intendants could not have achieved their exalted positions in the généralités without the support of Colbert and the king is little argued; however, one must also

conclude from this study that the king could not have become an "absolute monarch" without the dedicated support of his intendants. Of all the royal officers in the provinces, only the intendants proved capable of subduing the factious elements which had become common and powerful during the previous decade, or which had never been subject to royal control. One of Colbert's and Louis' greatest strengths was their ability to choose effective subordinates; among the many wise decisions they reached jointly were those which gave the rank of intendant to Pellot, Bezons and Daguesseau.

FRANCE



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